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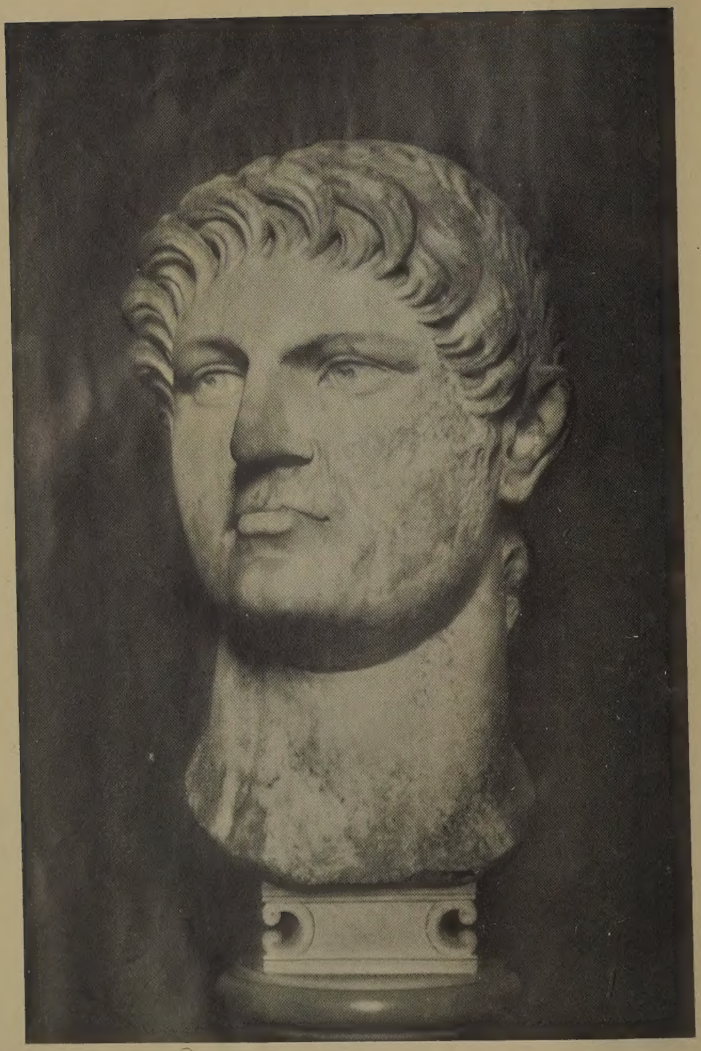
THE LIFE AND PRINCIPATE OF THE EMPEROR NERO



NERO

FROM A BUST IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE LIFE AND PRINCIPATE OF THE EMPEROR NERO

BY

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TO

MY FATHER AND MOTHER

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PREFACE

THE names of the modern authorities whom I have consulted for purposes of this history will be found in the General Bibliography at the end of this book. I have also used the results obtained in certain previously published papers of my own, which also will be found described in the Bibliography.

The Appendices and the Notes contain complete (I believe) references to all the ancient evidence which concerns this history, and, on occasion, discussion of its value or of controversies which arise concerning it. To these Notes and Appendices I must still venture to refer the student even at this time when the examination craze threatens increasingly to degrade, if not to destroy, patient learning in the University. But the general reader's attention is not distracted from the narrative, as the whole apparatus of inquiry is thus relegated to the end of the book.

My chief obligations are three, all owed in Oxford. Mr Furneaux's edition of "Tacitus' Annals" has been invaluable, for its notes and references in particular. Two series of lectures, as yet unpublished, by Professor Pelham, on the Constitution of the Principate and on the Principate of Nero, have been of service and suggestiveness all the greater because their influence has been as well an unconscious as a conscious one, and I cannot measure precisely the extent of my indebtedness. My tutor in former days, Mr Warde Fowler, Sub-Rector of Lincoln College, has read through this entire book in proof for me, although I must relieve him of all responsibility for any statement or opinion in it advanced. This is but part of a debt, always accumulating from the time, fourteen years ago to-day, when my

relations with Lincoln College first began. Seneca's writings may be laid under contribution here as elsewhere in this history. "Ex praeceptore in amicum transiit et nos non arte quam vendit obligat sed benigna et familiari voluntate. . . . Ingratus sum nisi illum inter gratissimas necessitudines diligo."

For some help besides in the correction of the proofs I owe thanks to the Rev. W. C. Allen, Sub-Rector, and to Mr A. W. F. Blunt, Fellow, of Exeter College.

The illustrations I have selected from the best sources, Messrs Cogliati of Milan, Alinari of Florence, and Reimer of Berlin, having permitted reproductions of photographs in works published by them. I also owe thanks to Professor Percy Gardner of Oxford and Mr G. F. Hill of the British Museum for ready help in this connection in a difficulty arising at the last moment.

This history, I may state in conclusion, is an attempt, not to "whitewash" Nero (though perhaps no man is ever altogether black), but to present a narrative of the events of that Emperor's life and of his Principate with due if novel regard to the proportion of interest suggested by those events. Therefore some personal biographical details or Court scandals receive but a scanty notice or are omitted as too insignificant for even an Imperial biography. In their room I substitute topics of, in my judgment, a wider interest, the study of which may perhaps prove of greater service. Great events, and not in the spheres of action or administration only, befell during the Principate of Nero. These, as well as the Emperor's character, may help, if it so chance, to justify this history.

BERNARD W. HENDERSON.

EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD,
April 26, 1903.

PROLOGUE

" Ut mater iuvenem, quem notus invido
flatu Carpathii trans maris aequora
cunctantem spatio longius annuo
dulci distinet a domo,

Votis ominibusque et precibus vocat,
curvo nec faciem litore dimovet,
sic desideriis icta fidelibus
quaerit patria Caesarem."

(HORACE, *Carm.* iv. 5.)

PROLOGUE

REVOLUTIONS begin from social and economic causes, but the combatants mostly strive for political forms, thinking best to change the product, by interference with the machinery, of government. It is in virtue of this that the political form does actually become of supreme importance. As soon as (at the end of the second century before the Christian era) the period of Revolution in the history of the Roman Republic was initiated by the reforming zeal of the Gracchi, that question of the constitution of the central Government of the Roman State came rapidly to the front. In very truth these early democrats had at the first challenged the existing practice of the Constitution incidentally, reluctantly, as a means to the gaining of objects which they deemed higher and a good which they required as indispensable. But it was the good, not of political power for the mob, but of land for the landless, of work for the unemployed (whom in splendid vanity of hope the statesman expected to welcome that opportunity for labour could it be but offered to them), of children for those in whose mouth might have been placed the ominous complaint of the French statesman, "Ce n'est pas la peine de faire des malhereux comme eux." To realise distress, your own, if not another's, is no more difficult than to discover the obvious inequalities of wealth and comfort. It were harder to find the remedy, whether for distress or inequality, did not the possession of supreme political power in the State offer itself as so visible

a panacea of ills, whether agrarian, social, or economic. But when the prince has won the golden key to enter from out the brier-encompassed wilderness into the palace of delight and dispossess its chieftain, he stands only upon the threshold of greater endeavour. Perhaps his very palace, into which he has gained entrance so hardly, is but a maze the more. Yet there it stands in all its splendour of flashing gold, dazzling the eyesight of all but the most detached. The battle shall be for the obvious prize.

Thus for one hundred years men at Rome fought for the prize of power, and destroyed the Republican Constitution by their fighting. Only the wisest realised that this would be the issue, some like Sulla, with regret; others like Caesar, with satisfaction. The Republic was sick of a mortal disease, selfishness. When the Sullan constitution, in truth its last hope (for Cicero's weaker policy had long since been discounted by the failure of the greater scheme), had perished in the new breaking out of the flames of faction, the paramount issue of the nature of the Government of the State remained to be decided by the appeal to arms, and few Republics may survive this in more than name. The blindness of the old Republican, the orator, the politician, was excusable, almost necessary. Yet not even a Caesar had the clear vision of the statesman. His solution of the problem of government was proved of default by the conspirator's dagger and by Cicero's rejoicing at his death. It was reserved for one, no soldier indeed, but greater perhaps than the greatest soldier of them all, to build up anew the fabric of the State out of a veritable chaos of broken aims and ruined bloodstained fragments of the past, to base it securely upon content and new-won peace, order, and prosperity, and by his genius to secure to Imperial Rome centuries of life and power and prestige, which had seemed

a vanished and a hopeless dream on the Ides of March. The "boy" Octavius possessed that which his great predecessor Caesar lacked, the sense for the past, the appreciation of Tradition and of others' love for tradition, the genius of compromise. Ruthless where mercy was impolitic, merciful and gladly merciful when pity was expedient, learning from day to day new lessons from his ever-changing surroundings, the Emperor Augustus finally devised that constitution for the new Empire which secured for the Empire—for Rome, Italy, and the provinces—peace and good government, objects for which parties for one hundred years had been striving with such ill success, and successfully barred by their very striving. In a constitution cunningly devised to hide a monarchy under Republican forms, the power of the individual ruler was in practice little hampered by the division of spheres of authority between him, as representative of the people, and the former actual ruler of the Republic, the Senate. Scarcely an element in the new constitution was new. But a new combination of the old elements, a re-arrangement of the disposition and incidence of old authority, gave birth to the Augustan Imperial Constitution, known, not as the Monarchy, but as the Principate. It was indeed the Principate, rather than Caesar's sword, which saved the State, though without the sword of Caesar the genius of Augustus could never have been allowed its scope. Order and Organisation were the keynotes of the new government. In the spheres of finance, of legislation, of jurisdiction, of provincial administration, a division of powers between the Princeps as magistrate and the Senate was instituted and so engineered that little rivalry was possible between the two, save that of emulation in good government. For practice quickly showed the Princeps to be the stronger

if thought of any other kind of rivalry arose, since he alone was master of the legions. Yet none the less there remained the body of the Republic visible to all eyes, though animated by a different spirit, one which now paid more care to the outlying members and the extremities of the Body Politic, than had the Government inspired, whether by a Gracchus or a Cicero. The Republic had sacrificed Good Government of its dependencies to its exclusive ideas of Freedom. Caesar had too openly immolated the idea which men had formed of Liberty upon the altar of his own ambition which should prove his Country's good. The greatest Roman of them all, Augustus, had known how to institute the one and preserve in some measure the appearance of the other. Thus the Empire welcomed the Principate, and, not unjustly, in the easy and thankful credulity of polytheism, added the Empire-Builder to the number of its Gods.

Difficulties and discontent remained when the Emperor handed over to his successor his Power and the new-formed State. In truth there was a plentiful crop of tares promising but a lugubrious harvesting, should the new husbandmen lack their predecessor's resolute and temperate wisdom. And this in a measure was the case. Yet partly it is that such good husbandry as his could not be wasted; partly that those who followed after have for reasons quickly apparent been maligned and depreciated beyond their due. For the tares failed to choke the wheat. There was turbulence in the armies, but it was quelled; open rebellion in the provinces, but for many years it perished for very lack of fuel to feed upon; conspiracy in the Capital, successful to the cost of an Emperor's life, but never shaking the immobile strength of the Empire. On the Eastern frontier fretted a rival Empire, Rome's implacable foe; in Gaul the spirit of Nationality and Fanaticism yet

survived Caesar's conquests and Augustus' policy, and these sought their stay in the yet unsubdued island across the narrow channel which marked the frontier of the Empire. Yet a broader Nationality and a Religion, politically, it may be, devised but at least with certain elements of Truth in it which were gratefully recognised, should speedily overcome the narrower types here as elsewhere, and weld the congeries of alien races into a united Imperial people. Still trouble remained in Rome, the Imperial City, herself. Power perhaps had justified itself too nakedly by force. The old sure anchorage of religious dread and Duty sanctioned by the Roman Gods seemed lost, and the ship was now labouring in the surf of doubt breaking over the quicksands of Greek scepticism, now spinning in the wild and baffling currents of Eastern superstition or the cult of pleasure. The few might yet find brave anchorage in Stoic creed or the nonchalance of indifference. But what of the many thronging the streets of Rome and the crowded life of the Graeco-Italian town? How should any sanction of morality or of righteousness be imposed upon their disbelief?

Small matter this might seem to the statesman, the philosopher, the historian of the day. The political difficulty in the city was more pressing. Servility baffled the wisest Emperors' efforts to galvanise the Republican elements of the Constitution into at least a small realisation of life. The Senate would not accept the risk with the share of power, the possibility of independent action pressed earnestly upon it by more than one of the early Emperors. Proud of its great traditions, it was too craven, too spiritless, perhaps too clear sighted, to act independently of the Emperor's will despite the Emperor's invitation, and therefore resented all the more bitterly its own limitations just because they were in part self-imposed. In this discontent, in this opposition,

lurked no small danger to Emperor and to Empire. The Republican ideal was to this Senatorial class one of class and city privilege: it was countered by the Imperial policy of expanding equality of opportunity to every subject of the Empire: and it resented its defeat. Privilege girt round about itself the philosopher's cloak of high-sounding maxims of equality, of freedom, of liberty, and never asked their meaning or their price. It clad itself in armour of shibboleths, time-honoured and deluding. It bowed down to idols of the market-place, old idols, idols of heroes, austere, remote Republican, of later Stoic warriors sacrificing their lives on altars to obsolete time-crusted divinities, yet honoured therefore all the more — and themselves in all blind honesty elevated to receive a like devotion. The Roman Aristocracy of the early Empire admired and envied, philosophised and grumbled, and because it could no longer use the State denied the State the use of its own services. Thus Republicanism deserved ill of the State.

Hence the successors of Augustus turned ever more and more to new classes in the State for State services; looked to the municipalities and provinces for civil servants and new Senators; asked of them good work ably done and were not disappointed. Public service of itself may offer some basis of morality and right. If the old families of Rome refused it, let them go. Nay, to expedite their decay may to the more impetuous Emperor seem even desirable. What are they at the best but useless grumblers, when they dare, and flatterers, when they do not dare, to grumble? The Empire is a living reality. There is work—good work —to be done. There are new provinces to win, new wars to wage, new dangers to overcome. The old pride of birth is offered its share in the service. It will not take it honestly. Then let it stand aside. Augustus' successors will carry on

the work which he has given them to do with other and abler instruments, if less high-born.

But the older Roman families, decaying, fruitlessly malevolent so far as present action went, yet have enjoyed a certain measure of revenge in controlling the Tradition of the Empire and its rulers. Tacitus, the sole great historian of the early Empire, lived in that same Tradition of the past in which they lived, and despaired all the more completely of the Empire in that he saw alike its necessity and the degradation of the old families which it involved.

Noblesse oblige. If the noblesse is so degenerate that it refuses to recognise the obligation, how can we but dislike the Constitution which seems to have caused the degeneracy, mock the degenerate nobility itself as fiercely as we may? Rome and the Roman great families are to Tacitus the main subjects of interest. The provinces, the Imperial administration, the people and the prosperity of the Empire as a whole —these were matters seemingly of minor interest to the Republican of the days of gold. Tacitus is no Republican, but he has preserved the Republican's point of view. "Ah that my theme were that of the writers of old," he cries. But the theme has changed. The city of Rome and its interests, the Senatorial aristocracy of Rome, its powers and its privileges, the populace of Rome, its desires and its pleasures, these still possess validity of interest because they are still of the elements which made the history of the time. But new elements are added to that history, and the pessimist historian finds them as lacking in colour as, to his eyes, in moment. Tacitus' genius has stamped for all time the figures of the Emperors Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero, upon the imagination of posterity. His history has no proportion in its sense of the importance of events. His attention, fastened upon Rome the city, is diverted elsewhere reluctantly and

with meagre results. The chief work of the early Emperors is done elsewhere, and thus even unwittingly he is unfair to them. They stand of necessity opposed in power and in interest to the old Senatorial families. Therefore he views them with disfavour.

The Principate was not hereditary. The Princeps was but a magistrate endowed *ad hoc* with powers extraordinary alike in content, combination, and duration, but always conferred and approved by Army, by Senate, and by People. Yet the reigning Princeps could always, during his lifetime, designate his successor alike by securing for him special powers constitutionally conferred, and practically by placing within his reach the control of the Guards in Rome. Thus, and also owing to the popular romance and glamour clinging round the name of the Julian house, for a century princes of the Julian-Claudian house succeeded one another. But Nero, last of the line, left no heir. The power had passed into other hands when Tacitus wrote his history. The era of the Julian princes had passed away in a tempest of battle and murder. The founder of the Empire was dissociate from Tacitus' prince, and his last descendant was no kin to the later ruling house. A gathering mist of horror and wonder clung round Nero's name, and it was no duty nor policy of Trajan to seek to dissipate it by the rays of historical research. To the writers of the Flavian and the Antonine age, the age of Nero was fit subject of declamatory writing and approved defamation. The figures of the time loomed larger before the writer's imagination as the mist of time and the mystery of rumour grew thicker. There was no ability to view the history of the Principate of Nero in its right proportion, no prejudice in favour of a careful handling of the person of the prince, no inducement to challenge the excited gossip of a later hostile age. History was the

orator's prize, not the student's workshop. Yet Tacitus remains our master for the time. For to whom else in the literary tradition can we go? There is Suetonius, the biographer of the early Caesars, whose lack of proportion is still more grotesque, whose avidity for Town scandal is equalled only by his credulity and distaste for any wider view. A contemporary of Tacitus, this poor substitute for a Plutarch in Roman literature went to the sources with a still more limited intent, that of selecting the piquant scandal of the busy city and serving it up in a heaped dish that might be appetising were it not so gross. With Dio Cassius, the Greek writer of the 3rd century, ends the list of professed historians of the Principate of Nero, and he is little better than a second-hand Suetonius writing in a pseudo-Thucydidean style.

Thus in the main we return to Tacitus as our authority. Indeed we do sorrily without him where he fails us. True, the inquiry into sources must here take a backward step. For Tacitus was no contemporary of Nero's, and for his own information relied on others' accounts, which now are lost to us. And it is justly urged that, as the sources from which he drew his facts were of very different calibre, yet as the unity of the picture drawn of the person and character of the Emperor Nero is always undisturbed, therefore so much the more credit must be placed therein. The wealthy courtier Cluvius, the bourgeois scientist Pliny of Comum, the young rhetorician Fabius Rusticus, all wrote histories of Nero's Principate, and Tacitus had recourse to all, especially the first named. If the verdict in Nero's disfavour seems to have passed unchallenged and accepted by the three, it is no mere Senatorial bias therefore which condemns him. Yet no one of the three was likely to write favourably of the dead Prince, and the master-hand has wrought the whole into

a work of Art with needful unity of colouring and harmony of tone.

Thus, under the forces determining the tradition, there was no need of the "reactionary conscience of a virtuous bigot"[1] to stimulate criticism and approve shortsightedness of view. To the calmest writer there was nothing too ill to be predicated of the last of the Julian house, and the Flavian literary circle lived in happy agreement on the point. C. Fannius' laudatory monograph celebrated the "Passing" of Nero's victims into exile or to death, and the shade of the savage Prince must needs appear as sign of stay to the finishing of the "fair and beauteous work." Not the ghost of Nero can more have enjoyed the perusal of the recitation of his crimes (the dream which made the Shade[2] read the three great volumes to the end must surely have been a veritable nightmare) than did the Flavian coterie of authors. And their impressions dictated for a century to come the verdict of history upon the Julian Princes. "Obtrectatio et livor pronis auribus accipiuntur; quippe adulationi foedum crimen servitutis, malignitati falsa species libertatis inest." Even though the malignity is honesty itself, and rather of omission and exaggeration than of wilful lying, it is not by the verdict of his historians of old time that we may at once judge even the Emperor Nero. Rather by his deeds and by his opportunities than by other men's opinions are we bound to judge him.

Easy indeed would the task be else, and the easier the later in time the writer is born.

Modern historians have ransacked the armoury of censure and abuse to obtain missiles with which to overwhelm the memory of the Emperor. Their language is too fierce for his contemporaries who suffered at his hands. We are

[1] Martelli, *op. cit.* p. 9. [2] Pliny, Ep. v. 5.

presented with Nero the Monster,[1] "the first in that long line of monsters who . . . under the title of Caesars dishonoured humanity,"[2] "who has no equal in history, to whom no analogy may be found save in the pathological annals of the scaffold";[3] with Nero the Arch-Tyrant,[4] "vulgar, timid and sanguinary,"[4] "last and most detestable of the Caesarean family,"[4] "vaniteux et grotesque . . . qui ne léguere à l'histoire ni une pensée ni une acte pour voiler un coin de ses infamies"; with Nero the "Scélérat, un tigre devenu fou,"[1] the "comédien grotesque,"[4] the "tapageur nocturne,"[6] "artiste manqué,"[6] "gamin couronné,"[6] "une créature absurde, mal faite, un produit incongru de la nature."[3] Not even any quality of greatness in crime, such a reputation as an Ezzelino might enjoy, shall redeem the desperate character from mockery, from a half-contempt, now at the hands of the great French writer levelled at the "empereur d'opéra," the "mélomane tremblant devant le parterre et le faisant trembler,"[3] now by our stately English historian at the "barbarity of the despot, released from all fear of God and overwhelmed at the same time with the fear of man."[4] How can it be that Nero is not in that seventh circle of Hell joined to Dionysius and the rest?—

> "Tiranni
> Che dier nel sangue e nell' aver di piglio;
> Quivi si piangon li spietati danni."

If the historian could pause before he indulge in the luxury of epithet-casting he might well consider that the reader's moral sense is weak which needs to be stimulated and aroused by such fierce comment, neither is such excitement of it any cause to it of strength. Moreover we may

[1] Diderot. Also Merivale.
[2] De Quincey.
[3] Renan.
[4] Merivale. Also Beulé.
[5] Duruy.
[6] Champagny.

perchance disallow the tacit claim of the great writer that we centre our view upon incidents and details which despite his power yet fill us with weariness and cause distaste, and we may take some broader view, escaping from time to time out of the close-girt city of Rome into the ampler Imperial surroundings of the city. In the Palace life and high society of Rome we have to find ourselves regaled with tales of riotous excess, of lascivious merriment, of affronts offered to all morality, all decency, all virtue. Lust and debauchery, heartlessness and cruelty, violence and gleeful murder, these fill the ancient records of these years. Meanwhile in the rare glimpses afforded to us of the wider Rome we see that the Empire prospers peacefully, wrongs are redressed, frontiers are guarded and extended, there is purity of administration secured, the provinces and Italy rejoice in their peace and their security. Six lines in our ancient records may suffice to outline Imperial edicts for good government; six pages must be devoted to the tale of unabashed wickedness in Rome. To scrutinise secret vice the annalist must be blind to public virtue. Rome is in his eyes as superior to her Empire as was in Cicero's view the meanest citizen over the noblest Gaul. The prince's sin is a more dainty subject than the subject's reasons for content, and more important withal. Thus the most brilliant annals may make bad history.

Here, too, we stand confronted with a very ancient problem. The private character and the public action of the Prince it seems are not consonant. The more passionately we believe that the one must influence the other the more our difficulties are increased. If, despite the ruler's deeds of scandal and the shameless life of the Court, the Roman world may prosper, how may the outraged moral sense escape the conclusion that the credit due to Nero for his people's well-being

may counterbalance some of the discredit which he merits for his life? Partly perhaps we may strip him of the credit, and so much the more admire the Emperor Augustus, in that by irresistible strength of an inflexible will he had founded that Imperial system which should survive by its inherent sufficiency the perils of the wickedness of its temporary Prince, and still increase in strength. Grant to the great Emperor all our just admiration, and yet we must perhaps confess that our historian's view of his last descendant may prove as inadequate as is the journalistic taste of all ages. Greater subjects than the Prince's amours and revels and the life of Rome may claim greater attention from us than from our Roman writer. Wars in Britain, in Armenia, in Judaea; the battle of Christianity with the State and powerful rival creeds, creeds of fanaticism, of enthusiasm, of resolution, of despair; administration in Rome, in Italy, in the Provinces; these demand our notice. And on the Prince himself must we needs pass sentence? What if he should prove to be cruel and licentious, even, if you please, at the end of his life, a tyrant, murderer, domestic villain, yet with all this be a capable ruler, able to choose good servants, soldiers, and governors, thus at least and as well in his statecraft and his resolution rendering good service to the Empire, to Italy, and to Rome? If the moral of this is bad, the genius of history must be indicted for it. The fact of his downfall may seem to some but a sorry recompense. Doubtless we should wish to administer the affairs of the Universe in logical sequence to our moral notions, to serve out retribution with unsparing hand. Under our guidance an evil Prince should govern an unhappy Empire, a tyrant should incur the curses of the present as well as the condemnation of all future generations. Perhaps it is as well that no last judgment is to be delivered by our wisdom and our charity.

CHAPTER I

NERO'S BOYHOOD, A.D. 37-54

§ 1. NERO'S BIRTH AND DESCENT.
§ 2. NERO'S EARLY YEARS. AGRIPPINA AND CLAUDIUS
§ 3. NERO AND SENECA.
§ 4. NERO'S RISE TO POWER.

"Ille mihi similis vultu, similisque decore
Nec cantu nec voce minor; felicia lassis
Saecula praestabit, legumque silentia rumpet . . .
Talis Caesar adest; talem iam Roma Neronem
Aspiciat: flagrat nitidus fulgore remisso
Vultus, et effuso cervix formosa capillo."

(SENECA, *Ludus.*)

ANTIUM: THE HARBOUR

CHAPTER I

§ 1. Nero's Birth and Descent

ON the Mediterranean coast of Italy some thirty-five miles south of Rome lies the small harbour town of Anzio, the ancient Antium, which is to-day a little picturesque port of no great importance, open to the south but carefully sheltered from the west wind. The basin of the harbour is filled with coasting craft and the dredgers which contend with the encroaching sand, tossing in the waves which are rolled in upon the quay by the south-easterly wind despite the long protecting bent arm of the mole. Out seawards on the horizon over the grey sea is seen a seeming island, the dark Circean Head, like Portland from the Devon coast. The long lonely sandy shore to the north of the busy market-place is honeycombed with substructures of Roman brick-work forming caves and galleries fretted by the waves. High brick walls, isolated fragments jutting up above the surface of the sea, foundations piercing the grass-covered hollows of the low cliffs, where two ragged urchins are at play and the solitary tattered herd tends his small flock of sheep,—these mark the site of villa and palace of old time. Here once was disinterred the great Apollo statue of the Vatican. But to-day only one solitary upright piece of a little white column, or here and there some faint trace of fresco painting on some fragment of stucco lying idly in the grass and no larger than an oyster-shell, are left to help our imagination of the erstwhile splendours of the little city, once the favourite country home of the Emperor Nero. Here at sunrise on the fifteenth of December in the year 37 A.D. he was born.

It was only on his mother's side that the future Emperor belonged to the House of the Caesars, pure and uninterrupted though his descent on this side was through a chain of Imperial Princesses. On the father's side he belonged to the family of the Domitii Aenobarbi, the Bronze-Beards, who won no small note in the last days of the Roman

Republic. The ruddy beard which was the characteristic of most of the men of the House was ascribed by family tradition to that remote ancestor whom the great Twin Brethren had sent from the fields as envoy of victory to the waiting Senate in the city, changing his beard's black to bronze in token of their divine authority. The men of the House were of a distinct type, valiant and cruel in war, haughty, reckless, and unstable. Of that Domitius who crushed Rome's later Gallic foes of the sub-Alpine cantons, Allobroges and Arverni, and paraded thereafter through the province with ostentatious pomp, the orator Crassus had declared that it could be no wonder if he had a beard of bronze whose face was of iron and his heart of lead. To him succeeded that Domitius, the somewhat ignominious hero of the defence of Corfinium and Massilia against Julius Caesar, one who disobeyed Pompeius to his general's ruin and broke troth with Caesar. His son, the daring admiral of the last Republican fleet, had first fought both Octavian and Antony on the Sicilian sea, then, making terms, was alike tricked by and treacherous to the defeated Triumvir.

Lucius his son, grandfather of the Emperor, won repute in the German wars. It is in him that that combination of tastes makes itself seen which later was to reappear in the Prince his grandson and win him evil repute—though the dower were thus one of heredity. He too was charioteer and lover of the Circus games; he too displayed a passion for the stage. Money he lavished recklessly, on wild beast and gladiatorial shows, and these he gave with such attendant circumstances of cruelty that Augustus, finding his private warnings of none avail, must needs publish an edict to restrain him. He took to himself for wife Antonia the elder, daughter of Mark Antony and of Octavia, Augustus' sister, and thus initiated his family's close relationship with that of the Caesars. Dying in A.D. 25 he left behind him a son, Cnaeus Domitius, and two daughters, Domitia and Domitia Lepida.

Fortune denied Cnaeus Domitius that field of battle wherein the nobler qualities of the House were displayed. She gave him in compensation an Imperial Princess to wife, and the envious depreciation of biographers of a later age. To reckless violence, one writer avers, he added callous brutality, treason, adultery, and incest. The talent which had served

his forefathers so sturdily in playing great leaders false he had devoted to the defrauding of money-lenders and of the jockeys of the factions of the Circus. They indeed might with small discomfort endure the loss. Yet were this hardly worthy of the high-born Domitius, that "youth of most noble simplicity," as a less scandalous writer of his own day names him. And the Emperor Tiberius who chose him in the year 28 A.D. as the husband for the girl Princess, the younger Agrippina, rarely misjudged men, if indeed he had any but political aims in his choice.[1] His young wife Agrippina was but in her thirteenth year. Born at Cologne on November 6th A.D. 15, she was direct descendant of the Emperor Augustus himself, and belonged to both the Imperial Houses, the Julian and the Claudian.[2] She was sister of Caligula, Tiberius' successor in the Principate, and daughter to Germanicus, Tiberius' nephew and the brother of Claudius the fourth Emperor. Her mother Agrippina the elder, heroine of the German wars, herself was grand-daughter to the Emperor Augustus. Thus the children of Germanicus and Agrippina combined in themselves the Julian and the Claudian descent, and Caligula with his sister the younger Agrippina were nearer akin to the founders of the Empire, Julius and Augustus, than were the later Emperors of the purely Claudian line, Tiberius and Claudius, and their descendants.

To this princess Agrippina and Cnaeus Domitius was born nine years after the marriage a son, their one and only child. He was born feet first—which was taken as of evil omen. Nine days after birth in presence of the Emperor Caligula his uncle he was given the name of his grandfather, Lucius.[3] But history is to know him as Nero the Emperor.

From one point of view much might be expected of such a child. His political birthright was no mean one. After Caligula's assassination in A.D. 41 he alone remained as male lineal descendant of Augustus and Julius, and one who represented these by his birth had greater actual claims on Roman allegiance than any mere scion of the Claudian House alone. The latter was but related to Augustus by adoption. But the young Lucius Domitius despite his

[1] See note at end.
[2] See Genealogical Table for all this section.
[3] See note at end.

name was in actual fact the consummation of the union of the two great Imperial families, so inextricably woven together in his day, and this counted to him politically as no small gain. The greater popularity of the young Emperors Caligula and Nero, the disfavour in which the mob held Tiberius and Claudius, are to be explained less on the score of age than on this of their relationships to Caesar and Augustus. Thus it might seem that it hardly needed Lucius' formal adoption in later years by the Emperor Claudius to mark him out as destined heir to the power of Julius Caesar, his veritable ancestor, in default of any claimant so near akin.

And though this kinship was always only on the female side, yet, by judicious insistence, even in Rome this might be preferred to the directest of descents on the male side from a Claudian Emperor. There might be however less happy results to the boy from this his descent. The men of the Julian House rank justly among the wisest and the greatest of mankind. But though an Octavia may redeem the women of that House from one great universal *damnatio memoriae*, yet on this the weaker side the infamy and lust of Julia, the intolerant ambition of the elder Agrippina, stain beyond redemption the honour of the line. Surely it remained but to combine these traits in one later Princess ; and Nero's mother Agrippina is branded by tradition with the conjunct mark. What love of righteousness might be expected from her son?

But this is not a plea to be too hastily entered. Though the Emperor Nero made wise political use of his Julian descent, though his claim of sonship to Aeneas, mythical ancestor of the Julian House, was in later years matter for the lampoon of the streets,[1] in character he was mainly a Domitius from first to last. The characteristics of his father's family seem to have been too strong to be greatly affected by the women who married into it. Though he could count Julius, Augustus, Antony and Agrippa among his immediate ancestors, yet the excuse of an inherited tendency to vice urged on his behalf even by a Suetonius (and forgotten by him as quickly as uttered)—must not overshoot the mark. Yet the grim humour of his father struck a note at his birth which echoes all through his career, modifying perhaps some of our ready censure if passion is a hereditable property. "Nothing," declared Cnaeus

[1] See note at end.

Domitius to his friends as they congratulated him on his son's birth, "Nothing can be begotten of myself and of Agrippina but what is accurst and hurtful to the public good." If the boy Lucius is thus already condemned, the blame of inherited vice may be the father's: that of her own character and resulting influence over her son's early years may prove sufficient burden for the mother.

§ 2. Nero's Early Years—Agrippina and Claudius

That a Roman Emperor's foes should be those of his own household was no unfamiliar feature in Roman Imperial History, wherein ambition not seldom fills the place vacated by affection. In the autumn of the year 39 A.D. a dangerous conspiracy was afoot, directed against the young reigning prince Caligula, and in it Agrippina was implicated. The whole plot of Lentulus Gaetulicus governor of Upper Germany remains perplexing; the motives and intentions of the conspirators are uncertain, and little is known save the details of their punishment. Lepidus, husband of the Emperor's sister Drusilla, may have been designed by the plotters to succeed him, but in that case Agrippina could benefit only at her own sister's expense. Of the needful preliminary acts thereto rumour promptly accused her. On the discovery of the plot, whatever it was, Caligula punished his brother-in-law, Lepidus, and Lentulus, with death, and his sisters Agrippina and the still more youthful Julia Livilla with exile. The Roman princess was an early licentiate in the school of conspiracy. Drusilla however seems to have been guiltless, and won her brother's favour. Agrippina was exiled to the small island of Pontia in the Tyrrhene Sea, fifty miles off the Campanian coast.

The father's death followed a year after the mother's banishment. Cnaeus Domitius on December 11th A.D. 40 died of dropsy at Pyrgi, a coast city in the south of Etruria. Thus the young Lucius Domitius before he was three years old was deprived of both his parents, and entrusted for upbringing to the care of Domitia Lepida, his aunt. The loss to the boy of the whole of his father's property, which the Prince his uncle promptly seized, was in his case perhaps a more serious one than that of paternal care and maternal education. Their place was filled for him at Domitia Lepida's appointing by a dancer and a barber. As however

the régime of the two pedagogues lasted less than two years the child probably suffered no more at their hands than had they been a philosopher and a politician respectively.[1] For in 41 A.D. the new Emperor Claudius on succeeding to his murdered nephew's power recalled Agrippina and Julia from exile, and restored to his grand-nephew, the boy Lucius, the whole of his father's goods.

New wealth was besides shortly to be added to him by his mother's second marriage. Domitia her sister-in-law, sister to Domitia Lepida, had wedded one C. Passienus Crispus, an orator of great possessions, and twice consul. Crispus now divorced his wife and married Agrippina. This princess' beauty can hardly have been popular with her sisters, and the not unnatural enmity created between Crispus' rival wives bore in course of time its due fruit. For Agrippina herself it was a safely inconspicuous alliance.

After the marriage the husband made haste to die, and Agrippina with her son inherited his riches. As Lucius' guardian until he reached the age of puberty, one Asconius Labeo was probably now selected. A Greek freedman named Beryllus,[1] a man not, it seems, of scrupulous honesty, and the freedman Anicetus, who was later to be the instrument of his Imperial master's deeds of terror and of vengeance, were entrusted with his education. They were fit instructors for the boy's intelligence and unfit for his morals. There was little from first to last but conspired against the latter.

The usual lack of interest in a child's early years was in the case of the boy Lucius Domitius made good partly by legend, not improbably invented by his mother to stimulate public curiosity, at least when such devices ceased to be perilous, and partly by an increasing rivalry and danger.

The old Emperor Claudius who succeeded to the Principate in A.D. 41 had married a young wife Valeria Messalina, daughter to that same Domitia Lepida who had tended Lucius' baby years. She was thus the boy's first cousin, and was but thirteen years older than he. Claudius, like other of the early Princes, did not disdain to love his wife, and Messalina ruled him with imperious sway. She bore to him two children. The elder, a girl named Octavia, was born about the year A.D. 39. The precise date is uncertain. The younger was a son, Tiberius Claudius, born on Feb.

[1] See note at end.

12th A.D. 41, and thus over three years younger than his cousin Lucius Domitius.[1] This boy speedily received, in place of an earlier cognomen Germanicus, the surname of Britannicus in early commemoration of Claudius' invasion and "conquest" of Britain, and by it he is always known.

Although, as has been said, no hereditary principle was in theory recognised as regards the devolution of the powers of an Emperor, yet the reigning Prince would naturally designate his son, if he had one, to succeed him, and put within his grasp the means of securing recognition as his father's successor on his father's death. Britannicus was therefore the obvious "heir to the throne" and, though not so near akin to Augustus as was the heir of the Domitian gens, yet he was in equal grade of descent from Julius Caesar, and far more pertinently a member of the reigning Claudian House.

Yet in the succession Lucius Domitius was his only possible rival and, if Agrippina realised this early, Messalina cannot have been blind to the fact unless it is only a mother's ambitious dreams for her son which can laugh at improbabilities and make mock of obstacles. Though Claudius himself might wish the young Domitius no ill, yet only a careful insignificance might save his life from the tigress fury of the young Empress, were her suspicions once excited. Cousinship was of very small account if her son's title to power were threatened. Later indeed tales were current that Messalina had despatched secret emissaries to murder her son's rival, but a snake, emerging from under Lucius' pillow as he slumbered in the noontide, had scared the assassins to flight. But indeed had the Empress sought his life to destroy it she had not been lightly deterred by a fabulous serpent. The centre of the story which Agrippina may later so cunningly have embroidered (indeed the lonely reptile, like the buckram men, quickly multiplied itself in the tale) was but the finding of a snake's cast-off skin beneath the bolster of the boy's couch. This he at his mother's desire wore as a charm in a golden bracelet, but cast it away in later years when hers became a painful memory to him, and sought it vainly in his last hour of need.

So long as Messalina ruled at Court Agrippina displayed for herself and for her son a studied aloofness, and shunned notoriety so far as was possible, as in her second marriage. Thereby without doubt she saved her own life and her son's.

[1] See note at end.

Even as it was, the peril grew, and only Messalina's passion saved them. For Lucius Domitius could not grow up in Rome unknown. The only grandson of the popular hero Germanicus who had been the Bayard of the people's adoration must needs attract to himself the people's desire and predestined affection. This, given an opportunity, quickly became apparent. In 47 A.D. Claudius celebrated the Ludi Saeculares, games in honour of the eighth centenary of the city's foundation. On one of the days of the festival there met to play the "Game of Troy" in mimic warfare two troops of youthful cavalry composed of the most high-born boys of Rome, no one of whom might be over sixteen years of age. At head of one troop rode the Imperial Prince Britannicus, then aged six. His senior by three years, Lucius Domitius, commanded the other with stubborn determination, as in old days his ancestor the young Iulus had ridden on the Sicilian plain before the eyes of Aeneas and the aged Acestes.[1] And none could doubt that despite the Emperor's presence the popular ovation on this day fell to Lucius, and not to the son of Claudius. On this day first the future Emperor tasted the sweets of the people's applause and favour.

Sequitur iactantior Ancus
Nunc quoque iam nimium gaudens popularibus auris.

Danger from Messalina was averted by her death. The young Empress' open licentiousness next year reached the height of frenzy in a mock marriage which she celebrated shamelessly with her favourite the Roman noble Caius Silius during Claudius' absence at Ostia. She had already affronted and alarmed the three great Court officials, Claudius' freedmen, Narcissus his secretary, Pallas his accountant, Callistus who read all petitions presented to him, partly by standing in the way of their supreme influence over the Emperor, partly by executing a former fellow of their number, the freedman Polybius. Callistus and Pallas indeed shrank at the last moment from the enterprise. But Narcissus was of bolder make, and seized the opportunity at last offered to him by Messalina's craving for mad excitement. Either she scorned her husband's stupidity, and greatly overestimated it; or she had confidence in his affection, and dared too rashly to do it outrage. Narcissus' risk was great and failure meant instant death. Once admitted to his presence the young and

[1] See note at end.

beautiful wife might still hope to win from the Emperor pardon alike for open infidelity and treasonable conspiracy. This the freedman prevented. Himself but a few years before complot with the Empress in one of her many murders, he now successfully sped his mistress down the steep road to death. The ugly drama ended in a series of executions. Messalina, little older than a girl, perished amid contumely and general detestation, dying by stroke of a tribune's dagger in the gardens of one of her own victims on the Pincian Hill, without Claudius' knowledge and against his command. The Emperor accepted the news in silence.[1]

Messalina's death gave at once the signal for intrigue and counter-intrigue in the palace. Her children Octavia and Britannicus were still so young and Claudius was by this time so well advanced in years (he was fifty-eight, being born in B.C. 10) that with the question of another wife for the Prince was bound up that of the succession to the Principate.

There were three candidates for the doubtful honour. Aelia Paetina enjoyed the advocacy of the victorious Narcissus. She was indeed an earlier wife of Claudius, whom he had divorced to marry Messalina, and had already borne him a daughter named Antonia. Lollia Paulina was Callistus' choice. She had in her favour the claims of wealth, noble birth, and childlessness, if not the rare merit of an untarnished reputation. Either of these marriages would naturally secure the succession to Britannicus.

But Pallas appeared on the scene with no other a rival than Agrippina herself, the Emperor's niece. This, it was urged, was a marriage worthy in every respect of the Imperial House. It linked together for all the future the Julian and the Claudian lines with a rivet not to be broken. It avoided the risks which might follow from any marriage of the princess with another. Agrippina was noble, chaste, a matron it might seem of the old Roman type. That she was not barren was in Roman eyes but an additional argument in her favour. That the stepmother who had an elder son of her own might not favour the advancement of the Imperial children was neither an issue raised by the advocates of the marriage nor contemplated beforehand by the Imperial intelligence. The boy Domitius was Germanicus' grandson, urged Pallas, and worthy of all honour from the Emperor.

Yet she was Claudius' niece. In the complexity of Im-

[1] See note at end.

perial relationships did this chance fact really matter? Surely all rules for wedlock were mere regulations of expediency. If the still sensitive Emperor felt scruples both religious and patriotic on this point, surely it was the kind forethought of the gods which had rendered Agrippina newly widowed and thus free, and this was unmistakable sign of Heaven's approval. It was but scandal which whispered that the Princess had assisted the complaisant gods. It was easy to bring pressure to bear upon the Senate, to collect an applauding mob, to legalise such marriages for the future, to threaten the Emperor with friendly violence were the wishes of the city disregarded. The other freedmen seem to have withdrawn their opposition. At least they survived Agrippina's victory. Callistus died a natural death. Narcissus became her ally. Perhaps they felt that Britannicus when Prince might not look with favour upon the foes of his dead mother. Claudius, helpless and wavering victim of the disputants, was finally helped to a decision in his Judgment of Paris, not so much by the solemn conclave he summoned to assist his deliberations as by the beauty and allurements of Agrippina herself, and she was declared the betrothed of the Emperor. It was not long before her chief rival paid to her the penalty for failure. Lollia Paulina, accused of seeking aid from Chaldaean magicians and Apollo's oracle at Colophon in her endeavour to win Claudius' favour, was stripped of the bulk of her wealth, banished from Italy, and promptly murdered, thus supplying to later days a theme for much fanciful illustration of Agrippina's savagery.

Perhaps it was not mere jealousy which caused her death at Agrippina's hands. Else how should Aelia Paetina have escaped? Not even the double rejection of the wife by the husband might allow contempt to overwhelm suspicion once and for all in the mind of her supplanter. Moreover a woman's jealousy might rejoice to see a defeated and humiliated rival her subject. But of Lollia it had been significantly said that she, childless, was therefore free from all ambition and therefore would prove a true mother to Claudius' children. The challenge to the new wife was open: the taunt was too true to be forgotten. If there should come a trial of strength between her son and the Emperor's, Paulina's wealth must not be devoted to the latter's support. So she paid the penalty.

In truth Agrippina was jealous, not of Claudius' affection, but of her influence over him, an influence dependent at first on her beauty. Calpurnia, a noble lady whose beauty the Emperor had chanced to remark and praised, was removed from his ken into exile, happy that so passing a commendation from the Prince might be allowed to win her no severer punishment. The princess had not secured her betrothal to permit rivalry or to fail to make use of her new relation to Claudius.

From the very first Agrippina used her new position not in her own interests alone, but also in those of her son. From the very first she devoted her restless energies towards securing his advancement at the expense of his cousin Britannicus. She never wavered in her purpose nor shrank from any measure to secure it. And so she drained to the dregs the cup of her ambition.

Lucius Domitius at the time of his mother's betrothal to the Emperor was a boy of eleven. Agrippina seized at once upon the idea of a betrothal between him and Claudius' daughter Octavia, as the first and readiest way to win him influence and still greater prospects in the future. There was no great difficulty in the way. The little Princess of nine years of age, an unhappy little pawn in the long game of intrigue, whose short life was as unhappy, save for her father's love of her, as her early death was cruel, was already at this time betrothed to a young Roman noble Lucius Silanus. He was himself great-grandson to Augustus in the same generation as Agrippina's son, held in this year A.D. 48 the high office of praetor in the city though but twenty-four years of age, and had already endeared himself to the populace, not only by his illustrious name and honours, but by that surest of roads to their hearts, a splendid gladiatorial exhibition, the expenses of which the Emperor himself had defrayed. All these facts were but so many additional inducements to Agrippina to remove this rival from her son's path.

She employed as her instrument an old Roman noble, Lucius Vitellius by name, a man thrice consul, once the honest and able governor of Syria, who had removed Pontius Pilate from his procuratorship of Judaea for the complaints against him, who had been a typical example of Tiberius' upright provincial governors, the father of a future Emperor, and in this year 48 A.D. Censor at Rome. The promise of his youth was marred by the performance of his age. By

flattery he saved his life and lost his honour. Prototype and exemplar of the Courtier of his day, he was fittingly employed by Agrippina for her sinister purposes. A son of Vitellius had just married and been divorced from Lucius Silanus' sister, Junia Calvina. Divorce of course was no stain on a woman's reputation in court circles. If Junia Calvina, this "beautiful and most playful of all girls,"[1] had felt no affection for her husband, yet the love which existed between brother and sister, however pure, was too openly displayed when such enemies were on the watch. The Courtier could anticipate the coming power of the Empress, the father resent the dishonour of his house, the grave censor curb the horrid license of public immorality. At the end of December 48 A.D. Vitellius accused Silanus, removed him in virtue of his censorial office from the Senate, and deprived him of the one day of his praetorship which yet remained to run. Claudius' very love for Octavia without further influence by Agrippina caused him to credit the accusation and cancel her betrothal with Silanus. On the very day of Claudius' marriage with Agrippina at the beginning of the new year, Silanus slew himself. Junia Calvina was banished from Italy. The uncle who wedded the niece ordered religious expiation for the surprising crime of fraternal love. Vitellius was paid for these and other services by shelter against attack and lived to extreme old age, happy doubtless to see his son follow in his footsteps along the beaten track of adulation. Ten years later, on his mother's death, Nero hastened to recall Junia from exile, an act of Imperial favour capable of many subtle interpretations by psychological ingenuity.

Thus Agrippina married Claudius, and, though common decency required some short interval of time before Octavia could become a second time betrothed, the sole hindrance to this scheme was removed. Rome awoke to the consciousness that if the Emperor's whims were ever at some other's dictation, a new ruler had indeed arisen. Messalina had played with power as the fancy seized her, and rather for pleasure than for power's sake. Agrippina exacted entire and unquestioning submission. She "appropriated Claudius."[1] Stern pride and severe simplicity ruled in the palace where once licentiousness had revelled. She secured Pallas' support, men said by shameless means, that for ambition's sake she endured the degradation and showed her perfect self-control

[1] See note at end.

by the abandonment of self. Her character must bear the brunt of such an accusation. Power was her one desire, and this should justify deeds, if it did so chance, blacker than her hungry greed for gold or even memoir-writing.[1] In a less heroic sphere of action she displayed many of those qualities which won her mother the passionate devotion of Roman armies and the admiration of the Roman world. Through exile and disgrace, by wile, intrigue, and beauty, she had at last seized hold of power and it should fare ill with any who forbade her its fruition. What should stand in her way? Not the senile decay of her husband, the childish petulance of a little step-son. Among the women of history who have dared and suffered greatly, reckless of crime, for power's sake and their children's after-power, Agrippina the Empress holds not the lowest place.

§ 3. Nero and Seneca

At the beginning of A.D. 49 Lucius Domitius son of the Empress was eleven years of age. He was a lad of lively intelligence and quick wit, fond of carving, painting, singing, riding, and driving. He also gave a little time on occasions to writing verses, which displayed at least the rudiments of learning. Clearly he was not a vicious nor a sullen boy, but with artistic and literary tastes, clever with his fingers, affectionate, fond of horses. He may have inherited his grandfather's tastes in some of these respects; yet if he gets good training and wise guidance there seems as yet no reason to despair either of his ability or of his honour. It was no part of Agrippina's policy to deny him now the best education possible, and there was recalled from exile to act as his tutor one who has acquired the greatest fame of all Roman thinkers and moralists, the philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca. Yet he was chosen rather for his erudition and culture than for all his philosophy.

The family to which Seneca belonged was of Spanish origin. Spain in fact, the most quickly Romanised of all the Western provinces, thanks to Sertorius, supplied not a few writers of note to the first century of our era, and the greatest of its Emperors, Trajan, to the second. Annaeus Seneca the father was of equestrian rank, a pleader and rhetorician gifted with unique powers of memory and a facile pen.

[1] See note at end.

Many of his writings survive. The Greek language and philosophy he loathed with fair impartiality. Of Helvia, the mother, her son writes with a warmth of honest praise and affection which makes his consolatory treatise addressed to her the most human and attractive of all his voluminous writings. She was true type of a noble Roman matron, cherishing her children and cherished by them. Lucius was born, the second of three sons, at Corduba some time at the very beginning of the Christian era. His elder brother M. Annaeus Novatus despite weak health took readily to public life in Rome, and was adopted by his father's friend the orator L. Junius Gallio, taking therefore henceforth this name. He attained the honour of the consulship, and in A.D. 52 became governor of the province of Achaea, when it fell to his lot in the dull routine of public business to listen to complaints against an obscure Jew named Paul and to dismiss the case as contemptuously as justly. He was thrifty, honest, courteous, an able public servant, and deservedly popular among all his acquaintances. The youngest brother, M. Annaeus Mela, remained contented with the lower equestrian rank above which his elder brothers both had risen. He married Acilia of Corduba, and their son was M. Annaeus Lucanus, the poet Lucan.[1]

The second son Lucius came early to Rome in charge of an aunt who nursed him through a long illness there, and exerted all her influence to secure him the first step in the Senatorial career, the quaestorship, many years later at the end of Tiberius' reign. She however spent sixteen years in Egypt from A.D. 16-32, with her husband Vitrasius Pollio, the prefect in charge of the country, and won approbation by avoiding any interference in public affairs, which was a rare merit in a Roman governor's wife.[1] Thus the young Seneca was handed over to other instructors.

Being weak in health he threw himself with all a boy's reasonable enthusiasm into the study and practice of philosophy. Under the teaching of Sotion of Alexandria he embraced the tenets of Pythagoras with fervour, and, believing for a while in the transmigration of souls through animal bodies, confined himself to a vegetable diet, his teacher arguing with some shrewdness that, even should the doctrine prove in the long-run false, at least the fare was inexpensive. There was some risk however lest the philosophic regimen

[1] See note at end.

should be by others confounded with a mere superstitious taboo of animal food which was then exciting some notice, and his father's dislike of philosophy seized the pretext to urge the abandonment after one year of the vegetarian rule. The young disciple himself believed his wits were all the sharper for his abstention, but in later years the old philosopher felt more doubt. He was however, as he himself says, easily persuaded to begin to dine a little better. Cooks in fact in his day had the full schools. It was the philosopher who lectured to empty benches.[1]

The teaching of another Greek philosopher, however, had a far more lasting effect on the eager scholar, and not a little of Attalus' the Stoic's teaching must lie embedded in Seneca's moral works. Even in those days of culinary triumph his lecture room was thronged. And though not all of his pupils came to learn how to live more honestly and more simply, yet the great number who sought, not a law to live by but the enjoyment of listening to their master's rhetoric might plead that at least the philosopher's school was a harmless "Inn of leisurely refreshment." But Seneca was not one of these. Ever the first to come and the last to leave, he hung on the lecturer's lips, waylaid him in the streets with eager request for more instruction, and actually observed his more important precepts. To the last day of his life he therefore refused mushrooms and oysters, unguents, wine, and hot relaxing baths, and slept on a hard mattress, since Attalus had recommended this so Lycurgean a discipline. From him he gained his love for the study of astronomy. The philosopher's sermons on the vanity of riches filled him with admiration. A life of "water and porridge" was just as vain. Neither Tyrolese peasant nor millionaire had any moral advantage, and the heaping up of riches was thus *per se* but a matter of indifference, a subject for a Stoic paradox the more. On the apt and enthusiastic pupil, who left his master to plunge into the vortex of public life, not all Attalus' lessons were wasted, and his health had improved. But to the end of his days he was greatly troubled by weakness of the lungs and asthma, and it was only the thought of his father's loneliness without him and no Stoic precept which deterred him as a boy from suicide.[1]

About A.D. 35 Seneca married Pompeia Paulina of Arelate, a very happy marriage. By her he had two sons, one of

[1] See note at end.

whom died young, and the other, Marcus, of whose "happy chatter" the father writes with felicity, cannot have survived him.[1]

Once the entry into public life was made, Seneca's ornate fluency quickly gained him a renown, which bestowed with one hand riches and influence upon him, and with the other a peril to his life. For his rhetoric incurred the violent young Emperor Caligula's jealousy, and only the assurance by one of the Imperial favourites that Seneca was bound soon to die of asthma saved him. The Prince contented himself with a scornful criticism of Seneca's oratory, and, neatly borrowing a metaphor from his dearly loved race-course, styled it truly enough mere "sand without lime." Such "prize-compositions" were indeed loose of texture, though popular with the ladies, and Seneca is always liable to this reproach. But the ship of his fortunes was sailing merrily enough under a bright sky when a sudden storm drove it upon a naked and a distant barren shore.

The unfortunate princess Julia Livilla had not very long returned from the exile to which her brother Caligula had condemned her when Messalina in A.D. 41, jealous of her beauty, sent her back to banishment and a speedy death. Nothing in the character of assailant or victim can prove either her innocence or her guilt of the charge of adultery brought against her. But the man who shared her accusation and endured the same punishment of exile was the now middle-aged philosopher Seneca. He therefore in A.D. 41 was banished from all his success and prosperity at Rome to the lonely island of Corsica. There is no proof of his guilt, though the fact that he out of the whole Court circle was selected by the Empress for attack suggests some indiscretion on his part, were it but that of too great influence with the ladies of the Court. Neither did the Emperor Claudius lightly condemn any man. He must have been satisfied that the evidence was sufficient. Yet the médisance of that School for Scandal, the upper circles at Rome, was always eager to put the worst complexion on any intimacy, however harmless, of an Imperial princess with one of her servants. There is a monotony and lack of originality in its belief which become simply wearisome. The limited intelligence of society caught at the explanation with which it had the most familiar acquaintance. The philosopher himself

[1] See note at end.

however, if he hints delicately at his innocence, will not impulsively claim it; though he deprecates his punishment, he dare not denounce its injustice when he hopes to win his pardon from the all-powerful Empress. There was no passionate protestation of an outraged virtue. So long as he might return from exile, he regarded it as indifferent whether it were for guiltlessness discovered or guilt condoned. "The kindness done me in either case is the same." Guilty or innocent, he uses the language of a diplomat and views the case with the detachment of a philosopher.[1]

At first he bore his exile bravely, horror-struck though he professed to be at the uncouth savagery of Corsica and its inhabitants. His stoicism coming to his aid, he could urge its principles as consolation to his sorrowing mother, Helvia, and published proof of his own apt discipleship. "The wise man could not be harmed by any blows of fortune. The rougher the ground beneath his feet, the poorer his fare, the more squalid his hut, so much the more easily could he turn his thoughts inward or lose himself rapt in the contemplation of the heavenly bodies. Even a poor scholar in the Stoics' school could know that the riches and enjoyments of the world were but dross and deceit. 'Animus est qui divites facit.'

> "'For 'tis the mind that makes the body rich:
> And as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds,
> So honour peereth in the meanest habit.'

"Disgrace affects no man who cares for no man's opinion but his own self-approval. The great man is no less great in his ruin, as the ruined fane is none the less holy in the reverence of the God-fearing. Involuntary exile were no greater hardship than the voluntary exile of emigrant and colonist. No conquered land but knew the home of the Roman settler. 'Ubicunque vicit Romanus, habitat.' The Roman colonist followed the flag. 'Trans maria sequebatur colonus vexillum.' Seneca could be 'joyful' in Corsica, 'cheerful' in his exile as at the summit of prosperity."[1]

But as the months passed away and brought the exile no relief, Seneca quickly lost heart and became querulous as Cicero himself in like misfortune. It was by the grossest flattery of Messalina, of Claudius, the "divine Caesar," and of his powerful freedman, Polybius, Callistus' predecessor, that Seneca in his "Consolation" addressed to the latter sought

[1] See note at end.

to purchase his pardon and recall.[1] Had he been made of sterner stuff, literature would have lost a fine example of rich Latin eloquence, and philosophy have added yet another warrior to that tiny band whom by unaided inspiration she arms against the bitterest shafts of fate. And unfortunately all his prayers availed him nothing with the Emperor.

"Mens immota manet: lacrimæ volvuntur inanes."

The old scholar's lament over Seneca rings finely yet, though with vain attempt at excuse—for we cannot accept it:

> "We cannot denie but this was Seneca's writing: I think not to the intent hee meant it should be published, but according to his present fortune abiectly and too humbly written to a slave (alasse) adorned with how many prayses? I am ashamed, I am ashamed. Whosoever published this was an enemie to Seneca and his glorie."[2]

Yet most certainly the "Consolation" was published by Seneca's friends at his urging.

But in due course of time Messalina slew Polybius and perished herself. And it was thus to the lonely exile on the inhospitable shores of Corsica that Agrippina's thoughts turned when she sought a tutor for her son. Aged fifty years, he would check and discourage youthful follies. Banished by one Empress and recalled after weary exile by another, he would not favour the son of the first at the expense of his own pupil. He was the most silver-tongued of all Rome's orators, richest and most ornate of all her writers, and the city would welcome him back to her after so long absence, and be grateful to the Empress who recalled him. Thus he would at once, and haply too in the future, assist her secret plans. Of one thing only Agrippina was resolved when she summoned Seneca to Rome and gave her son into his charge at the beginning of A.D. 49. The philosopher should not teach a possible Emperor philosophy. Did the Empress realise that the pupil in his life is influenced as much by the philosopher's actual observance of his own maxims as by the maxims themselves, when she forbade the principles of moral philosophy to be taught to her son by Seneca?[3]

Forbidden therefore to instruct his pupil in first principles, Seneca must content himself with the supervision of his con-

[1] See note at end. [2] Lipsius, Trans. Lodge. [3] See note at end.

duct, of his diet, and of his study in literature and poetry, to which Lucius Domitius devoted himself with zeal. Seneca's rules for education were obvious and sensible. It was to begin early and have regard to minutiae. The boy was to be trained in modesty and courtesy, simplicity and sobriety, the endurance of hardness and constant labour, with necessary intervals of recreation, exercise and amusement. Above all, the teacher of the young noble was to shun the vice of flattery, and ever to be on the watch to check passion in his scholar. With such an estimable stock of educational platitudes Seneca addressed himself to his task of forming the character and controlling the errors of Lucius Domitius. For the result he has been, now exonerated, now bitterly accused. The prohibition to teach philosophy may have hampered him, unless it increased the affection between the young boy and his grave master. The philosopher's literary vanity and robust self-assurance may have kindled the like vice and similar bad taste in the prince, unless they roused him to a healthy emulation. Nero was not vindictive nor passionate, and some of the credit for this may be ascribed to Seneca, for these were the points on which the preceptor actually lays the greatest insistence. He is of course said to have realised from the first day of their acquaintance the boy's savage nature and have set himself to keep it in check, knowing that "if once the lion tasted blood" his innate cruelty would display itself. There is no good evidence for this, a foolish tale, and easily invented. It were much more to the point to demonstrate that Nero was naturally cruel, which were a demonstration of some difficulty. Under Seneca's guidance, in fact, it seems that for the few years before his accession to the Principate, the boy followed his bent in the study of literature and art and laborious construction of original verse. Meanwhile his preceptor followed the line of least resistance in allowing and helping these pursuits, consoling himself by addressing philosophical treatises to his friends, until, on his pupil's coming to power, the embargo laid upon them was removed, and he could, with great satisfaction, dedicate them in vast bulk to the Emperor himself. Thus Nero wrote verses, and some of his actual papers passed later into Suetonius' hands. The many corrections and erasures in the manuscript gave evidence of the difficulties with which youthful poetic genius loves to contend. But from the wisdom

and sound sense which the young Emperor is soon to display in the first years of his administration, we may suspect that Seneca's teaching was not so wholly devoid of that instruction in "affairs" of which the modern critic has accused it. And the real friendship between boy and sage, which was the immediate fruit of their intimate relations, is neither a small nor an unprofitable result even of a six years' course of teaching wherein philosophy may play no part.[1]

§ 4. Nero's Rise to Power

His mother's marriage to the Emperor secured her son his first step in advancement by his betrothal to his cousin, Claudius' daughter, Octavia, in A.D. 49. A second and still more significant success was his actual adoption as son by the Emperor on February 25th of the next year, and Claudius explained to the complaisant Senate, in words which Pallas the freedman, now Agrippina's confidential adviser, put into his mouth, the reasons which had induced him to bestow this honour on Lucius Domitius. That Britannicus was still his father's chosen heir appears from the arguments used; but the adoption of his cousin into the Claudian family and the name of "Nero" was intended in some vague and unexplained fashion to strengthen the younger lad's position. Even Claudius' antiquarianism suggested no scruple to him, although, as the learned noted and he himself confessed, this was the first adoption into the patrician House of the Claudii. And as Nero, according to the tales told, henceforward can hardly raise a finger without the heavens instantly assuming a red and fiery aspect, their colour on this occasion was not even regarded. At the same time the title of Augusta was conferred on Agrippina. It was the highest title of honour for the Imperial Consort, and had never before this time been bestowed upon the Empress during the Emperor's lifetime. Claudius had refused it to Messalina.[1]

Nero, as the prince Nero Claudius Caesar Drusus Germanicus, must henceforth be called, now rapidly increased in power at his brother Britannicus' expense. On March 4th, A.D. 51, he made his solemn entry into public life, although up to that day no Roman boy had ever been known to come formally to man's estate before the end of his fourteenth year. Nero, then but recently thirteen, was on this day allowed to assume

[1] See note at end.

the "toga virilis," the emblem of the estate. The festive day was marked by the usual unregarded protest from heaven. Nero must be quickly made fit for State office. For the future the Senate arranged that at the age of twenty Nero should be consul. Meanwhile he should be known as consul-elect. Various significant dignities were granted him. The proconsular Imperium, limited, however, in his case in that it did not extend to the city of Rome, was part and preliminary sign of the Imperial power, and no precedent could be quoted for its bestowal on one so young as Nero. The title, Prince of the Youth, Princeps Juventutis, had been earlier given by Augustus the Emperor to both his great grandchildren, Caius and Lucius Caesar, together: but Britannicus was not associated in the honour with his brother. The bestowal on Nero of the Pontificate and membership of the four great priestly colleges followed probably on the next day, March 5th. The day before he had been honourably escorted to the Forum, where he declared a largess to the people and donative to the soldiery. He paid his thanks before the Senate to the Emperor in his first public speech. The difference between the two lads was most clearly marked during the special games celebrated at this time in the Circus to win the approval of the populace. If the mob, argued the Empress, saw with their own eyes the one boy clad in the triumphal robe of solemn ceremonial and high office, of man's estate and, as it seemed, imperial dignity, the other in the modest dress of inconspicuous childhood, not even its intelligence could fail to grasp the presage of their future fortunes.

These honours were stamped on the Roman coinage. But formally declared his heir by the Emperor, Nero was not. Yet when in the summer Claudius left Rome to celebrate the great Latin feast on the Alban Mount, Nero was appointed to act in his absence as Prefect of the City, an office of great traditions and dignity. True, Claudius had commanded that no other save purely formal cases should be brought before the boy prefect for his decision, but the lawyers disobeyed the order.

Yet, if heir to the Principate there could be when theory recognised none and practice bestowed the dignity on him who already possessed the power, Britannicus was still true heir to Claudius, nor was there wanting a party to support his claims, soldiers and officers, officials and freedmen. The chief military power in, and therewith the control of, the city was

possessed, under the Imperator himself, by the two prefects of the Praetorian Guards, and these, Rufrius Crispinus and Lusius Geta, had been faithful servants of Messalina, and would probably be loyal to her son. Agrippina set herself to isolate her step-son from his adherents, and the lad himself gave her the pretext. That forlorn little prince understood and resented the falsity of the caresses bestowed upon him by his step-mother. His adopted brother was preferred before him, and he himself was treated with studied neglect in public. No friendship existed between the two boys which might lighten this grief. His only sister was betrothed to the elder boy, his rival. His protection against peril was but the affection of an old and easily duped father, or the selfish ambition of courtiers to whom he was a mere tool, a card easily played and easily thrown away. He could not but realise his own loneliness, for he was quick of understanding and proud. The very slaves who waited upon him lightly deserted him. And he was young enough to display his petulance and anger. He mocked openly at Agrippina's endearments, and she, on trumped up charges or honourable pretexts, dismissed the officers loyal to him. He taunted his adopted brother Nero with his old names, Domitius, and Bronze-Beard, and she carried fierce complaints against him to his father. His had been but a boy's not-unnatural outburst, perhaps but a momentary slip into old usage by forgetfulness. But Agrippina was merciless. "Was a mere boy," she urged to the troubled and credulous old Emperor, "to cancel at home decrees of the Conscript Fathers, commands of the Roman burgess-assembly?" Britannicus' tutor, Sosibius, who had grown rich in Messalina's service, was now put to death, and new guardians, a step-mother's nominees, took his place.[1] It became also a wife's duty to preserve the discipline of her husband's Guards from the rivalry of two equal commanders. Crispinus and Geta were cashiered, and the sole command was given to one Sextus Afranius Burrus of Vasio in Narbonese Gaul, who had filled many minor posts and was a soldier on whose fidelity and gratitude the Empress might rely.[1] Together Agrippina and her son climbed the slippery slope to power.

On the traveller's sight, who penetrates to-day into the Marsic highlands by the valley of the Upper Liris, and climbs the steep ridge on his right hand above the grey village of

[1] See note at end.

Capistrello, there breaks, as he reaches the downward trend of the road, one of the fairest views in central Italy. A great snow-clad spear-shaped peak towers before him, prince of a mountain barrier which embraces the greenest and most fertile of deep-set basins, that is lit by the evening sun of Italy with a glory of colouring that no Alpine pasturage may rival. But a few years ago a wide sheet of water filled the cup-shaped hollow, and the Fucine Lake spread fever and malaria among the unhappy villages clustering along its treacherous shores. For there was no natural outlet for its waters, now receding to leave a stagnant fringe of marsh, now flooding over its borders with sickness and poverty in its company. Only the untiring faith and energy of Prince Torlonia have pierced the mountain barrier and released the waters of the lake, winning for the dwellers of the basin new lands, prosperity, and health, and for himself perhaps a greater guerdon of honour than legislator or financier enjoys. Yet he had but opened up again, with better work and wider excavation, the emissary which Claudius the Emperor, that Prince at whom our Roman scandal-mongers sneer so contemptuously, had first set himself to cut through the mountain side. And our historians, telling of its opening in A.D. 52, dwell on the scenic display which marked the ceremony, on Agrippina's pomp, on her quarrel with Narcissus, to whom the Emperor had entrusted the work, on his inefficient workmanship and spirited defiance to the Empress, on anything and everything save only the intended good of the work itself. Agrippina and Narcissus quarrelled. The powerful freedman had declared war on the Empress's hopes and on Nero's prospects. We must be content to accept this fact—a fact of undoubted moment for the future—and leave that so unimportant occasion of the quarrel. The Emperor sits in martial array, the Empress in gold-bedecked robe. A vast throng is gathered together in the natural amphitheatre. The voices of the gladiators ring up into the clear air from the surface of the lake, "Ave Imperator, morituri te salutant." The scene vanishes. The sunset glow dies away on Monte Velino's snow. The blue smoke of Avezzano rises in the still air. The bells of the diligence, slowly climbing the lonely mountain side, sound faintly in the distance. Peace lightly settles on the land redeemed, and on the memory of Emperor and Prince who redeemed it.[1]

Next year, A.D. 53, Nero, aged fifteen, married Octavia. It

[1] See note at end.

was a political marriage, with no affection on either side, and resulted, not unnaturally, very ill. This year, too, the lad appeared in the grateful rôle of pleader for the privileges and the succour of subject cities of the Empire, which might win him a wider popularity than that which he now enjoyed in Rome itself. A Greek oration on behalf of Ilium, the Roman city on the site of Troy, with its memories of Trojan Aeneas and the first namesake of the Julian line, was a delicate and clever appeal to the Emperor's antiquarian tastes, and well adapted to endear the speaker, himself Aeneas' descendant, to Claudius. Through his plea Ilium won immunity from all public burdens. His Latin oratory won for Bononia, now sorely spent by a great fire, a subsidy of ten million sesterces. Phrygian Apamea, lately shaken by an earthquake, was granted five years' remission of taxation. And Rhodes, which nine years before had lost her independence for the unwarrantable crucifixion of some Roman citizens, winning this back again through Nero's pleading, hailed the young speaker as a second Sun God, who raised the island to second birth above the waters of misfortune. Seneca's education was bearing noble fruits of rhetoric, and his pupil was eager for the repute to be gained by the love of letters and by eloquence. Now first in the tradition Nero appears with marked desires of his own. And it is a forecast of the future that he seeks public approval by public display, though it be but of oratory before subservient Senators, and that it is the Greek half of the Empire chiefly which has joy of his helping.[1]

But a sudden and an unexpected storm threatened to break upon the hitherto uninterrupted sunshine of the Empress's hopes. It is highly probable that Claudius' own desires as to the succession varied from day to day, so contradictory are the reports. Yet for the past four years Nero had undoubtedly been winning favour in his eyes. But now in the last year of his life, A.D. 54, the Emperor showed signs of a definite change of purpose. Perhaps his affection for his own son had never in reality become faint, and, if he concealed it, and humoured his ambitious wife, this was at least the best way to secure a quiet life. Perhaps Narcissus urged him to throw off the mask. Meeting Britannicus by chance one day, Claudius embraced him; "Growe apace," quoth he, "and take account of me for all that I have done; I that have done thee wrong will make amends."[2] Signs were not wanting that Agrippina's

[1] See note at end.

[2] Sueton. ap. Philemon, Holland Trans.

power was waning, and from more than one direction. The Emperor had dropped hints uncautiously in his cups. "It was his fate, it seemed, to perforce endure for a while his wife's immodesty and thereafter punish it." The very Senate had dared oppose her wishes and condemn one over whom she had cast the mantle of her protection. The Roman Senate now no more controlled events than does the weathercock the storm, but it answered no less promptly to the first winds of an approaching hurricane. And now as if in answer to the coins issued bearing the likeness of the child Nero, the Senate on its own responsibility dared to issue one with Britannicus' image upon it.[1] The Empress too was curiously superstitious, and there were portents at the opening of the year which might fill her with alarm, shallower only than that inspired by her husband's hints.

Could she, and this may have been the bitterest thought of all, feel sure of her son himself? Domitia Lepida, his aunt, who had cared for his earliest years, was seeking to win the lad's affection from his mother to herself. Equal to Agrippina in riches and in beauty, in violence and daring, she challenged the Empress—the prize, a boy's obedience; the cards, bribery and his mother's harshness against a mother's influence; the stakes, life on the one side, loss of power on the other. She played and lost. Agrippina resolved the doubt if her very son for whose fortunes she had striven would turn against her with her usual promptness and resolution. Charges of conspiracy by sorcery, of troubling the peace of Southern Italy, were brought against Domitia. Nero himself gave evidence against her. Despite Narcissus' vigorous opposition, a sentence of death swept from Agrippina's path yet another rival. Those who lightly condemn Nero for his witness forget the real issues at stake. He sacrificed an aunt whose kindness to him had been undoubted, to a mother's safety. The mother may have been to blame in imposing on her son the hard necessity of choice. But, the battle once joined, would the critics have had Nero abandon his mother in the struggle and look on idly? He was bound to declare his choice of sides.[1]

The trial had fully disclosed a more dangerous enemy, Narcissus. The wealthy freedman now appeared as "Leader of the Legitimists."[2] His indeed was an unenviable position, since his quarrel with the Empress. Nero's accession must cost him his life; yet it might seem he ran an equal risk from

[1] See note at end. [2] Schiller, p. 343.

Britannicus, whose mother he had slain. But this risk was in reality more remote. To guard Claudius' life zealously, and, on his death, to be chief instrument in securing to his son the power, was his best policy. Alarmed by his ill success in the trial of Domitia, Narcissus now made as it were a public declaration of his choice of sides, probably to encourage the younger prince's now faint-hearted supporters. He could, he admitted to his friends, expect no mercy from either prince; but he would, he declared, sacrifice his life readily for the old Emperor's sake. A second Messalina threatened Claudius' life. He had not disclosed the shamelessness of the one to conceal the other's equal sacrifice of her woman's honour and her wife's fidelity. He threw embracing arms around the younger prince; might the gods, he prayed, hasten his coming to a man's strength, to the day when he should put down his father's foes. Yea, let him avenge him also on his mother's slayers, so that only that day of his strength should quickly come!

If Narcissus' desire was to make terms with Britannicus, he showed in all this no small subtlety and skill. But he underestimated Agrippina's daring, and the imminent peril to the Emperor's life. Prostrated by an attack of gout, he left Rome, in a fatal hour for himself and for his Master, to seek the softer climate and warm springs of Sinuessa. Forebodings of his own and an inevitable and punctual comet warned Claudius vainly of his approaching end. There was at Rome a noted poisoner, Lucusta, a Gaul, long one of the recognised tools, says Tacitus, calmly, of the Imperial power. Agrippina sought her out and obtained of her a drug which should render the Emperor distraught and cause a lingering death. On the night of October the twelfth, in the year A.D. 54, there was placed before him, as he sate at meat, a dish of mushrooms by his server and the taster of his food, Halotus, who was in the secret. In the finest of the mushrooms lay concealed the poison. Claudius ate it with zest. But to the anxiously expectant Empress it seemed to have no such effect as she desired, and panic seized her. There was at hand the Imperial Court physician, C. Stertinius Xenophon, of the Asclepiadae of Cos. He had newly received at the Emperor's hands the boon of freedom from taxation for his fellow islanders. He had served on the staff on Claudius' expedition to Britain, and been decorated for his services in the campaign. He was now the murderess's accomplice.

Rapidly, as if to aid him to vomit, he thrust down his Prince's throat a feather smeared with a deadlier poison. In the sixty-fourth year of his age and the fourteenth of his reign Claudius died.[1]

Recovering at once her self-possession, the Empress acted with masterly ability. The palace doors were fast barred. The news spread of the Emperor's dangerous illness ; and the prayers publicly offered at daybreak for his recovery by Senate, consuls, and priests, were stimulated by the issue of one lying and favourable bulletin after another, the while Claudius lay dead on his couch. Inside the palace Agrippina eagerly awaited the hour of noon prophesied to her by Chaldæan seers as the hour of her triumph. Calling Britannicus to her side she burst into a passion of feigned tears, naming him true likeness of his father, seeking comfort from him, detaining him by various devices in her chamber. Octavia his sister and Antonia, the dead Emperor's first-born child, were similarly detained. At the crisis of their fortunes, in the bewilderment of grief, Claudius' children were helpless, and there were none to help them.

At mid-day, on October 13th, the waiting crowd saw the palace gates thrown open. Nero appeared on the palace steps with the Prætorian Prefect Burrus by his side. At a word from their officer the Guard then on duty in the precincts saluted the Prince as Imperator, and rapidly placed him on a litter to escort him to the Camp on the city walls. There were still some, it is said, who hesitated, who looked back at the fast-shut doors, and asked where Britannicus might be. But none gave them answer, and they followed the rest. Nero harangued the troops in the Praetorian camp, promising a large donative to each man, and they acclaimed him as their Emperor. The Senate's hurried decree ratified the choice of the soldiers and bestowed the usual honours upon the new Prince. Only the title of Father of his Country was modestly declined upon the score of youth.[1] As evening fell Nero quitted the Senate House, now Princeps of full right. His popularity as a boy attended him. The provinces accepted his succession without hesitation, the Roman populace with delight. Nor hand nor voice after those first anxious moments outside the palace gates was raised against him in any part of the empire. Claudius' own wishes were never known. His testament was suppressed. It were too

[1] See note at end.

great a risk, said some, to excite pity for Britannicus by the publication of a will wherein his own son should be seen neglected in favour of an alien. Others, in later days, drew a more obvious and less probable conclusion, stating that the younger prince had been named therein his father's heir. It made no difference. The dead Emperor received the then unwonted honour of deification, that "fiction of tenderness to his memory,"[1] which beseemed the recipient better than the givers. His funeral obsequies rivalled Augustus' in magnificence. Agrippina had attained her crowning ambition. Nero, a young, untried, unknown Prince of less than seventeen years of age reigned in Claudius' stead.[2]

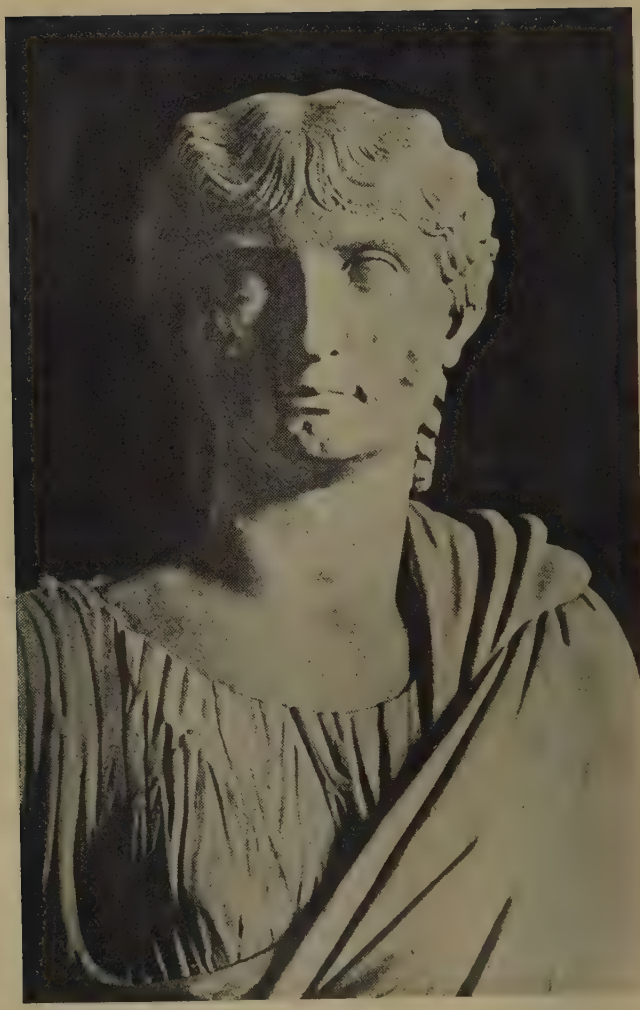
[1] De Quincey. [2] See note at end.

CHAPTER II

Son and Mother, A.D. 54-55

§ 1. The Promise of a Policy.
§ 2. The Struggle for Rule.
§ 3. Acte.
§ 4. The Death of Britannicus.
§ 5. The Fall of Agrippina.

"The worldly hope men set their hearts upon
Turns ashes—or it prospers; and anon,
Like snow upon the desert's dusty face,
Lighting a little hour or two—is gone."
(Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám.)



AGRIPPINA

FROM A STATUE IN THE GLYPTOTHEK, MUNICH

Identification probable

CHAPTER II

§ 1. Claudius' Successor: The Promise of a Policy

"Omnium somnos illius vigilia defendit, omnium otium illius labor, omnium delicias illius industria, omnium vacationem illius occupatio. Ex quo se Caesar orbi terrarum dedicavit, sibi eripuit, et siderum modo, quae irrequieta semper cursus suos explicant, nunquam illi licet subsistere nec quicquam suum facere."[1]

SENECA'S undiluted flattery of the Emperor Claudius had in his lifetime been as unavailing as it was insincere. One of the first acts of the Emperor Nero was to pronounce at his predecessor's funeral an elegant eulogy composed for him by Seneca, in which again the diplomat prevailed over the moral philosopher and senator. But the truth both of Seneca's own feelings towards the dead Emperor and those of the Senatorial class in Rome very quickly came to light, and Nero and his advisers first shaped the policy of the new Principate accordingly.[2]

The Emperor Claudius had been true heir in policy to Julius Caesar, and had caught up suggestions bequeathed by Julius to Augustus and his immediate successors, but of set purpose neglected by them. In the extension of the Empire over seas to embrace the island of Britain, in the extension with studied generosity of the citizenship of the Empire to the subject peoples, in the extension of his own anxious control to all departments of administration, Claudius had renounced the cautious policy of Augustus, and recalled the tireless energy and comprehensive liberality of Julius. Yet even Julius' policy had been unpopular with the Senatorial class, and Claudius was no brilliant general at the head of a devoted army, whose magnanimity and clemency were combined with physical strength and endurance. The Senate might assassinate Julius, but could not despise him. Claudius it both

[1] Sen. Consol. ad Polyb., vii. 2.

[2] See note at end.

despised and hated. His shambling gait, awkward carriage, and foolish smile, his vulgar tastes, cowardice, cunning, stupidity, and superstition, his antiquarianism, petty precision, and halting speech, all concealed with success the statesman and administrator. Graver charges could be brought against him by the trembling Senate. The administration of justice was to him so great a source of delight that he sorely encroached upon the exercise by that body of free decision which Augustus had studiously bestowed and Tiberius sought to encourage. In his choice of personal servants he looked to the new and despised class of freedmen, and their influence alike over him and over the State had waxed great at the expense of the noble Senatorial families. In this, and probably of intention, he had offended the aristocracy by demonstrating the humiliating fact that they were not indispensable. This is an unpleasant truth which most men have to learn in their time. And it was both necessary and expedient for the better government of the Empire that the services of new men of a lower class should be employed side by side with those of the old families. By the time of Hadrian this had become generally recognised. But Claudius' was the crime of the innovator, and he laid emphasis on the change instead of trying to conceal it. His freedmen were wealthy and arrogant. Pallas enjoyed a fortune of three hundred million sesterces, and gravely accepted compliments on his old-fashioned Arcadian parsimony, when he declined a proposed grant by the Senate of a poor fifteen millions more. To his credit be it said that his gigantic wealth was still overtopped by Narcissus' when he refused the insignificant addition.[1] It is a curious reflection of the instability of fame that while Rome trembled before a Pallas, she scarcely knew of the freedman's brother, Felix, chosen by Claudius to govern Judaea, before whom an insignificant Jewish prisoner appeared to reason of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; that while the city admired Seneca, it regarded his brother Gallio with indifference. Philosophy, power, and wealth, met with their reversal in the fame which came to be the gift of the Christian Church. From neither Church in later days, nor Prince in earlier, did the Roman Senate win what it deemed its true meed of admiration. Claudius' freedmen humiliated its pride as did Louis XI.'s ministers, Oliver the barber and

[1] See note at end.

Tristan l'Hermite, that of the feudal Lords of France.[1] Senatorial discontent met with fierce retaliation from the old Emperor, and not a few Senators, during the reign, paid with their lives the penalty of their position, while other victims in high station were sacrificed to Messalina's cupidity and the freedmen's greed. Thus Claudius had been unpopular, partly owing to his personal failings, partly owing to the growing necessities of the Principate. That unpopularity found its liveliest expression in the Feast of the Saturnalia at the Christmas following his death, when the grave Seneca published a parody on his recent deification, which was read with intense enjoyment by Roman society. The licensed fun of the season of course discounts the seriousness of the attack, in which the humour is at least as marked as the malignity, but we cannot strip it of all personal rancour, nor of political significance. For Nero's approval of the Satire was evidence of the intention of the new government to avoid the errors for which the dead Emperor is in it "depainted in a fooles coat," and mercilessly hounded out of heaven.

The scene opens on earth. Claudius lies sorely smitten, struggling to yield up his life. It is between the sixth and seventh hours of the thirteenth of October. ("More precise one cannot be, for even philosophers agree better than clocks together.") Why, asks Mercury indignantly, are the fates so cruel? Why is the agony so prolonged? Clotho reluctantly snips the thread of life. "She had wished to wait but a short while longer, that he might bestow the citizenship upon those few aliens—Gauls, Greeks, Spaniards, Britons—who had not yet received it. But she will yield to Mercury's bidding." Thus, Claudius appears in Heaven. Dismay reigns at the sight of him. Who could this tall, hoary-headed stranger be, who nodded his head unceasingly, shuffled his feet along after him, whose tongue was unintelligible, neither Greek nor Roman nor of any known nation, but a raucous, confused, and melancholy rumbling, like a sea-monster's? Hercules, the traveller, is sent to interview him, and is terror-struck. He had seen nothing the like on all his many travels. But he tries him in Greek as the best chance. Claudius is hugely delighted. They are philologists, then, these folk! There will be some place for his historical works after all! But the goddess

[1] Martha, "*Les moralistes sous l'Empire romain*," pp. 362, 363, makes the comparison which readers of Quentin Durward cannot but appreciate. Perhaps only Sir Walter could have drawn for us Claudius' character, as he has James I. and Louis XI.

Febris has accompanied him from Rome, and explains his case, to Claudius' great wrath. With his own familiar gesture —for none can understand even his loudest muttering—he orders her off to execution. But no one takes the least notice. "They really might all have been freedmen of his for all the heed they took of him."

Claudius sees his power is gone. A cock is nothing off his own dunghill.[1] He makes up to Hercules. But Jove holds a cabinet council, and Augustus succeeds in destroying his chances. He enumerates Claudius' many victims, condemned without a hearing. "Bethink ye, Conscript Fathers, what sort of monster seeks admission to the number of the gods! Let him say three words quickly, and I profess myself his servant! Who will worship him? Who will believe in him? Make such an one a god, and who will any longer believe in you?" urges Augustus, anticipating a favourite argument of the fathers of the Church. Claudius is condemned and haled off to hell by Mercury.

En route the travellers pass by the Roman forum. They see it thronged with a rejoicing crowd. It is the day of Claudius' funeral. The people is walking about as if it were free. Only a small knot of attorneys is sorrowful, and one of the lawyers, who now may emerge from obscurity, mocks them. "I told you," quoth he, "that topsy-turvydom wouldn't last for ever." "As soon as Claudius saw his funeral, he perceived that he was dead." For the doggerel song rose up merrily from the market-place:

Weep for the hero!
Readier none else
Sate to hear lawsuits,
Gave a decision on
Hearing but one side, or
Oftener no side.
No judge is left us
Now to give sentence
E'en in vacation.
Now to him Minos,
Minos the Cretan,
Judge of the silent ones,
Yields up his office.
Beat in affliction your
Breasts sorrow-laden
O petty pleaders;
Dead is your paygiver!

[1] The jest at Claudius as the "Gallus"—as being born at Lugdunum—baffles my attempt at reproduction.

Mourn minor poets:
Who now will read you?
Chiefly bewail ye
Who from the dice draw
Profits stupendous!

Claudius was delighted, and longed to stay to hear more of his praises, but his escort was obdurate. Narcissus had been sent on first to get things ready. Now, all sleek from the bath, he runs up to fawn upon his master. "What," cries he, "has a god to do with the haunts of men?" With a blow of his stick Mercury despatched him on before them.

Down, down they went, smoothly and quickly, for all Claudius' gout, till the Emperor caught sight of Cerberus. The black, shaggy monster alarmed him. "It was not a beast you would like to meet in the dark, and he was used to a white poodle." He summoned up his courage. "Claudius Caesar comes," he shouted. At once a merry rout danced on before him, chanting and jubilant.

There were all Narcissus' many victims. Soon Messalina heard the news. Up thronged all the freedmen, Polybius, Myron, Harpocras, and others, all sent on to the shades before him. Prefects, Consulars, kinsfolk, made a mighty band to meet him. "Come," cried Claudius, "Friends everywhere, at any rate. How *did* you all come here?" An angry shade at once hales him off to Aeacus for judgment. He is prosecuted under the Lex Cornelia for murder. "Thirty Senators, three hundred and fifteen knights, the common folk as sand of the sea shore," runs the bill of indictment. Petronius appears for the defence, but Aeacus stops him. He will hear only one side. Silent astonishment reigns among the ghosts. "This was surely as unjust as it was new. But though Claudius might think it unjust, at least it was no novelty to *him*." Aeacus had just condemned him to play for ever with a bottomless dice-box, when Caligula hurried up and demanded him as his slave. "He had given him kicks in plenty while alive, and here were his witnesses to it." Aeacus allowed it, and Claudius was handed over to one of Caligula's freedmen to be his slave-secretary.

Thus ends the burlesque, as it is extant. Underneath all the nonsense there lurks the anger against the dead Emperor, for his cruelty and his deformities, his passion for law-suits and injustice, his subservience to his freedmen, his desire to extend the Roman name. The accusations are curiously

linked together. One might for example pardon his lack of fluency in speech, but who could forgive his legal zeal, or forget that, like Discord in the poem,

> "Di citatorie piene e di libelli,
> D' esamine e di carte e di procure
> Avea le mani e il seno, e gran fastelli
> Di chiose, di consigli, e di letture;
> Per cui le facultà de' poverelli
> Non sono mai nelle città secure.
> Avea dietro e dinanzi e d'ambi i lati
> Notai, Procuratori ed Avvocati."[1]

Ten years before, the author of the Satire had exhausted his well-equipped armoury of adulation in praise of Claudius, of his literary genius, of his untiring care for all, of his majesty and mercy, of his glory and humanity, of the weight, sobriety, and eloquence of his judgments. He had prayed that "that bright star which had shone upon the thick and palpable clouds of darkness overshadowing the land, and dispelled those mists, might shine for ever." He had besought heaven that not on the children of his generation, but on the children's children should that day dawn, which should first enlist Claudius into the Divine company of Heaven. It may be that the public conscience was outraged by Claudius' deification, and that the public memory hated the recollection of his deeds. Neither is probable. But it was not for Seneca to dress up the Senatorial indignation in puppet robes for the Saturnalian festivity, and thus "avenge the public conscience."[2] It was his part to guide Nero's policy along a more sunny path of popularity, and shun his predecessor's gloomier way. Others might more fitly, if not more humourously, have emphasised the contrast between the performance of the past, and the promise of the future.[3]

Policy and promise alike were first expressed in the speech (probably composed by Seneca) delivered by the young prince in the Senate House on the day of Claudius' funeral, a speech which in its importance for Roman constitutional history is hardly exceeded in interest in Latin literature.

The authority of the Conscript Fathers, declared the Emperor, and the common consent of the troops, had chosen him to fill that high position. He was in the happy position of one who, coming to his power, had no private wrongs to

[1] Ariosto, L'Orlando Furioso, xiv. 84.
[2] Duruy, iii., p. 551.
[3] See note at end.

avenge, nor any desire for vengeance. He sketched the outline of his future government, the limits he intended to impose upon his exercise of authority, with obvious reference to those acts of his predecessor, which for himself he now disclaimed, grievances still fresh in the memory and keenly resented. It was not, he avowed, *his* intention to appropriate to his own cognisance all suits at law, to summon the disputants into his own secret Council Chamber, to aggrandise the few at the expense alike of integrity and justice. Neither wealth nor any private influence might force their way into his presence. His household was separate and discrete from the Administration of the State. "You, Conscript Fathers," cried the young ruler, "must retain the privileges and discharge the duties of former days. Italy and the Public Provinces[1] shall make appeal before the Consuls' seat of judgment and before none other, and these shall give them access to your tribunal. For myself, you have entrusted the armies of the State into my keeping. It is these shall be my care."[2]

Both in its statements and in its omissions, this speech is equally valuable. It is an appeal made to the precedent set, not by Claudius, but by Augustus; and a clear statement of the principles of the "dyarchy." Senate and Consuls on the one side, the Princeps on the other, were to divide the higher jurisdiction and the government of the provinces between them. His was sole charge of the army, theirs of the peace in Italy. The necessary servants of the Imperial household were to discharge their proper functions, but not to be allowed to encroach upon those of the regular magistrates of the Republic. The Republican Constitution balanced the Principate. The constituent elements of the former, were not to be dependent on the prince for their activity. Caesar's authority was to be concurrent, not supereminent. On the other hand, nothing was said of any change within, or in the principles of, the Imperial administration itself. Freedmen, in fact, must be employed, but their power should be limited, and their rapacity checked for very lack of feeding. The Imperial provinces should be governed by the Emperor's nominees, chosen by him from the Senatorial class, and of tenure dependent upon his pleasure, as before. Appeals against these should be heard by him, or by his delegates. No single hint of that exclusiveness as regards the government attitude

[1] *I.e.*, the Senatorial, as distinct from those reserved to the Princeps.
[2] See note at end.

towards the non-burgess population of the Empire, an exclusiveness which was so dear to the short-sighted Senatorial aristocracy, escaped from the Emperor's lips. The control of foreign affairs, of war and of peace, had long since passed from the Senate's hands into those of the "monarchical representative of the people," and Nero made no surrender of privileges or of duties which were implicit in the very conception of the Principate. But that two co-ordinate, co-existent, if not co-extensive, powers exist in the State is clearly stated, and Nero avows himself thereby descendant of Augustus in policy and in prudence as well as in lineage.

To a certain extent, the promises were fulfilled. In part, they were impossible of fulfilment. His freedmen could be, and were, kept in check for a while by the new prince, but the Emperor's household could not for all that be on a level with any private noble's. The Senate could be encouraged to act independently of the Princeps, and risk an occasional decision in his absence. But if ever the encouragement fails, it may cast away the mask of dignified independence, and reveal the features of submissive terror underneath. The tide is still low; the rocky ridge defies its encroachment. But the flood may sweep in to submerge it, and who then will chain the impetuous Western sea?

But the issue, however it might chance, was still unrevealed, and hidden in the future. In the Imperial speech lay the promise and the encouragement for the present. The days of doubt and tyranny seemed past. A new era was begun. The Senate welcomed the speech with acclamation. It decreed its engraving on silver, and its reading at every Consular election. True, it had welcomed Caligula's first oration in very similar fashion, but to renewed, almost pathetic, hopefulness was added expediency. In the prince's words it possessed a veritable "bond of good rule for the future," and we must needs consult our bonds from time to time to be sure that we have them in safe keeping.

§ 2. The Struggle for Rule

If Seneca shaped the policy in word for the new Princeps, indeed the Dowager Empress Agrippina might seem to wield the power. Through her striving, her son had succeeded to Claudius, and his youth might seem to her sufficient cause of a regency to be exercised efficiently only by herself.

Regent in anything but fact she could hardly be, but this position she expected, as well as a theoretical association in power with her son. A proud, self-willed, imperious woman, such as was Agrippina, one who had moulded Claudius to her will, could scarcely surrender at once her well-nigh absolute sway to her son, a lad of seventeen, who owed his very position to her energy and her crimes alone. A Chaldean prophecy, it is said, had once warned her that she might secure the Empire for her son, but he himself would slay her. "Let him slay me, so that he but rule," had been her defiant reply. It is a tale obviously invented after the event, not ill-suited, however, to Agrippina's nature. But it is less in harmony with her attempts to appropriate at least an equality of power from Nero on his accession. Marcus Junius Silanus, brother to the unhappy Lucius, once the betrothed of Octavia, she caused to be poisoned. Yet so lethargic had been the temperament of this descendant of Augustus that even Caligula had allowed to the "golden sheep," as he wittily labelled him, to live peacefully and undisturbed. Without Nero's knowledge, Agrippina destroyed him, so clumsily that the crime was manifest, so indifferent was she to public opinion. Narcissus, the freedman, could hardly expect pardon. Thrown into prison, he committed suicide, partly redeeming an inglorious life by burning all Claudius' secret papers in his possession. But though Nero had not desired his death, his anger at it was of small avail. Agrippina treated him as she had treated Claudius. Her image appeared on the earliest coins of the new Principate side by side with that of the ruler, as it had done on coins of the old. She "carried on the trade in his name." She had hopes of an equal oath of fidelity to be taken by the Praetorians to her as to her son. To her Nero seemed to have entrusted "the whole regiment of all matters, public and private." In very fact she seems to have "usurped the power" under Claudius, and continued to exercise it during the first six months of Nero's rule. There was nothing whatever in the constitution of the Principate legally to prevent a woman's rule, still less her association in power with son, brother, or husband.[1]

Seneca, however, and the praetorian prefect Burrus, looked on in profound dismay. Augustus and Tiberius had denied even to a Livia any actual exercise of power. It was but the frenzied passion of Caligula which had named a Drusilla to

[1] See note at end.

be his heir, and the incurious stolidity of Claudius which had admitted a woman to a partnership of empire. If now this woman, an Agrippina, should govern in her son's name, the promises of his opening speech were futile, and his popularity would not long sustain the burden of his impotence. Murder and suicide formed but an inauspicious opening to the new Principate. In setting themselves courageously to destroy Agrippina's power, Nero's counsellors were doing good service both to their young Emperor and to the State. Their victory, too, could it be won, would be popular. The "monstrous regiment of women" was more repugnant to Roman traditions than Knox could ever prove it opposed to the word of God. It was not indeed the part of the ordinary citizen with no political aims or ambition in view to cry aloud and testify. But if those in high places began to "study to repress the inordinate pride and tyranny of Queens," he would consent to their success with gladness. And so much hope was there for them that Nero could not long be expected to endure even his mother's heavy yoke. Grateful to her he undoubtedly was. The first watchword given by him on the first day of his rule to the Palace Guard had been "The Best of Mothers." Honours, too, he heaped upon her. But he was his mother's son, high-spirited and self-willed. He fretted under her haughty and severe discipline. He was intelligent enough to see that her continued rule might endanger the stability of his power, the prosperity of his subjects, perhaps even his life and hers together. Claudius' subserviency to women had won him ridicule and hatred. If in a moment of irritation Nero had been heard to exclaim, despairingly, that he would abandon the government and withdraw to Rhodes, Seneca, by skilful handling of him, might hope to incite him to rid himself of Agrippina's domination.

The devices employed by the ministers to overthrow the Empress-Mother were not so creditable as the end undoubtedly was praiseworthy, which thereby they sought to attain. True, in part these were beyond reproach. It was but a fulfilment of Nero's early promises when the Senate was encouraged to rescind a decree issued by Claudius in 47, which required the quaestors elect to give gladiatorial shows. For the Quaestors' affairs undoubtedly belonged to the Senatorial "sphere of influence." Agrippina and Pallas opposed the Senate in this without avail. The Conscript

Fathers held out stubbornly. Though summoned to meet in the Palatine library itself, that she might be present within hearing of their deliberations, separated from them but by a curtain over the doorway at the back of the room, they relied on Nero's promises and support, rose superior to the added risks of the situation, and braved the wrath of the mortified Empress. Again, it was not only a clever, but a wise ruse of Seneca's which baffled her attempt to assert equality with her son in the domain of foreign politics. As Nero was giving audience to some Armenian ambassadors, Agrippina entered the hall, and made towards him with obvious intent to seat herself beside him, as she had by Claudius on very similar occasions. Now, already men were asking if the young prince was man enough to grapple with the new peril which threatened the Eastern frontier, and neither Rome, nor the Eastern envoys, nor the Eastern peoples would be likely to regard Agrippina's claim to interfere as a proof, either of the new ruler's strength, or of his wisdom. Seneca's presence of mind alone averted the catastrophe. At a quiet sign from him, Nero rose hastily from his seat and advanced down the hall dutifully to salute his mother before she reached him. This dissolved the Council, and the hearing of the ambassadors was conveniently finished elsewhere. And Nero's splendid choice of the general, C. Domitius Corbulo, to command in the threatening war with Parthia was his own, for Corbulo under the regime of Claudius and Agrippina, had been studiously deprived of any military employment, and it reassured the timid folk in Rome mightily.

The new prince, indeed, left to himself, could win golden opinions. "He let slip no opportunity of generosity, clemency, or courtesy." While refusing statues for himself, he pleaded before the Senate for the erection of one to his dead father, Cn. Domitius, and presently instituted an annual sacrifice, on December 11th, in his memory. He secured the grant of consular insignia for his old guardian, Asconius Labeo.[1] He vetoed two undesirable prosecutions. On January 1st of the new year, A.D. 55, he exchanged the consulship designate which had been his since March A.D. 51,[2] for the consulship, which now he held for the first time, resigning it after two months. His colleague was L. Antistius Vetus. But when he, in accordance with custom, came forward to take the oath of obedience to all Imperial decrees, Nero, amid the plaudits of

[1] See p. 24. [2] See pp. 38, 39.

the Senators, prevented him, as his colleague and his equal. In speech after speech he reiterated his promises of clemency, and gave practical proof of his readiness to pardon. The Senate began "to dream itself back again in the days of the Republic."[1] If "Nero's is the earliest deliberate attempt to strengthen the Principate by basing it upon popular goodwill,"[2] the attempt promised to meet with good success.[3]

Despite these successes, Seneca still mistrusted Agrippina and her influence. Of the queen-regents of history, some have yielded place to their sons with joy, others, like Theodora, with an ill-concealed regret. Some, like Irene, have refused the surrender, and battled desperately for power. Agrippina, with her real claims upon Nero's gratitude and her pride, was but too likely to belong to this last class. Nero's natural disposition did not seem to promise that persistent resistance which his advisers deemed necessary for the State's peace and his own popularity. Two devices remained to be employed, both of them, as has been suggested, somewhat discreditable. Seneca has already, as it were, entered his own defence. "The wise man," saith Seneca, "will do that even whereof he doth not approve, that he may find the passage thereby unto greater ends. Neither will he abandon his morality, nay, but he will fit it unto the necessities of the time. And that which others do employ upon their glory or their pleasure, he will use unto the public service."[4] Tools so sharp do the work desired, but cut his hands who uses them. To render his pupil jealous of Agrippina's power, Seneca insisted on the majesty of his own omnipotence. To break her influence he gladly let the passion of love have unchecked sway with the lad. Thus he used glory and pleasure unto the public service. He attained his ends; yet surely he injured his pupil in the very attempt to do him service. Not by adoration of his power, not by connivance with his desires, is the young ruler rightly trained. What if thereafter he lays the burden of his offences down at his unsuspecting tutor's feet, and demands that he share at least its reproach?

"Look, Nero Caesar, upon this huge and restless multitude, and thus you shall fitly commune with yourself. 'Am I not now as God upon the earth, arbiter of life and death and fortune unto peoples, cities, and nations which no man may

[1] Schiller, p. 97.
[2] As suggested to me by a former pupil and scholar of Exeter College.
[3] See note at end.
[4] Sen. ap. Lactantius, Inst. Div. iii. 15.

number? Mine is the giving of prosperity; at my beck and will alone men flourish. Thousands of swords leap from their scabbards at my nod. It is mine to raze cities to the ground, to remove them overseas, to bestow liberty on some, to snatch it from others' grasp. Kings I make slaves, and on the subject's head I place the kingly crown. Cities shall be cast down quick, or shall spring from the soil at my bidding. . . . To-day I will answer to the gods, if they claim the account, for the race of men.'"

"All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake and said, 'Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the honour of my majesty?'

"While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, 'O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee. . . .'"

No voice from heaven cried to the young Roman monarch. In his ears there rang but the words of the sage, urging him to mercy and to clemency, for that he was a very god on earth, and for his glory's sake and his people's adoration he could do no other save show pity. "He who shall bravely speak the truth, and shall do him no flattery, is the one great need of him who hath authority and lacketh nothing." It is the same philosopher who speaks. How hard then may it be for the common man to abstain from adulation? Nero is God upon the earth. Therefore he shall show mercy. Nero is Prince supreme, and who may wrest his power from him?

Even such is Seneca's training of the boy Emperor.[1]

§ 3. Acte

It was, however, no preaching of imperial omnipotence which created the final breach between Nero and his mother. Another less recondite and more human force accomplished this.

Nero, placed suddenly in a position of well-nigh absolute power at the age of seventeen, now gave loose rein to a passion which carried him away headlong. It must be remembered that he was unchecked alike by the tone of his age and by the traditions of his house. His former instructor, far from objecting, approved. It is indeed remarkable how

[1] See note at end.

small a part the virtues of chastity, of humility, of obedience, play in all Seneca's interminable moral treatises. The young prince easily spurned the first, since his pride was encouraged to make mock of the second, and there existed, it might seem to him, no duty to claim the third. His ministers complacently regarded his entanglement as the surest means of weakening Agrippina's influence. Neither public opinion nor political expediency demanded that the lad should struggle against his inclinations. And what was there to help him in such a struggle? There was for him, prince of the imperial house and pupil of Seneca, no sanction divine or human to compel him to loyalty. Octavia was noble and her conduct beyond reproach. Had her rival been a Roman lady of high birth, that might have been another matter, namely one of political import. But the rival was only an enfranchised slave-girl. A few antique precisians even in that Roman society might refuse to condone. The majority would marvel that any should think it necessary to attempt palliation or offer excuse. "Sin"—the word was unmeaning. There might be a question of taste, of dignity, of *convenance.* The merry Greek gods—if they existed—laughed at such human frailties. The sober philosopher shrugged his shoulders. The Roman god was a little out of date in Court circles. And what a relish the whole affair lent to the gossip, the heavy wit, the playful scandal of the dining-hall! "The forbidden course," remarks the great Roman historian meditatively by way of explaining Nero's infatuation, "is overpoweringly attractive." Nero confided his passion for Claudia Acte, once a slave-girl from Asia, now a freedwoman in the Imperial House, to two of his comrades, Marcus Otho, future Emperor of Rome, and Claudius Senecio. He received from them the encouragement which he had expected from such young men of fashion, and approval besides from graver men, eager to sever Agrippina from her son. Acte repaid his very genuine love with a fidelity which survived his faithlessness. Vainly, a few years later, she implored the gods to preserve his love for her, and to stay his marriage with Poppaea. To-day, on the wall of the Cathedral of Pisa, is the record of the shrine which she built to Ceres in such a vain hope, pathetic little memorial of a vanished dream lurking amid the fairest group of buildings which adorns North Italy. Her hope failed, and she quietly and sadly gave way. Yet for all this Acte was one of the little band of faithful women who buried the dead Prince, when

he was outcast, and his memory accurst by all the world besides. The romantic has rightly little place in Roman history, which may hardly trespass on a province which fiction, especially religious fiction, claims for its own. Here however, the simple facts may be left to tell their own tale, unimagined, unembroidered. Tradition adds that Acte became a Christian. It is a graceful tale, and there is no evidence for its truth.[1]

Agrippina burst into fury on discovering Nero's love for Acte. Her pride was sorely outraged by the thought of an ex-slave-girl as her rival in influence with her son. It was easy to find nobles to take oath that Acte was sprung of the royal stock of the Attalids of Pergamum. Such a lie might flatter Nero's sense of decorum; it could not cajole Agrippina's wrath. Unable to take the matter patiently—sensibly, some might add—she heaped insults and reproaches on her son, the only result of which was to estrange him irrevocably from her, and drive him into Seneca's arms, who promptly lent him a friend Serenus, under cover of whose name the Prince could cloke his visits and conceal his gifts to the girl. Suddenly the mother changed her tactics, confessed her untimely severity, placed her riches at his disposal. The change of front was too open, the insincerity too transparent. Neither could the fierce woman always wear the mask of a satisfied complacency. Nero one day chose carefully from the Imperial heirlooms and sent to her a robe richly studded with jewels, one much coveted by others, perhaps by Acte herself. Agrippina received the peace-offering scornfully. "All that her son possessed was her gift to him. Did he expect her to show gratitude if he gave her back a part and robbed her of the rest?"

Thus what has been characterised as "perhaps the most harmless and the most sentimental episode in Nero's life,"[2] completed the estrangement between mother and son, an estrangement beginning in her stubborn will and pride and desire of power, and fanned by his advisers. Yet she was his mother, and Nero, more self-controlled than she, struck at her instruments, not at herself. He need at least no longer endure the arrogance, the "austere regard of control" of the Roman Malvolio, Pallas, long Agrippina's trusted adherent, and manager of the Fiscus, the Emperor's private Treasury. In strict theory Pallas was but Nero's domestic servant, and in

[1] See note at end. [2] Schiller, p. 304.

no sense a magistrate. His power and his arrogance had long since been unconscious of the theory, and when the Prince sent for him he magniloquently demanded that "his accounts with the State should be taken as balanced." Nero, quite satisfied with the fact of his dismissal, agreed, and, as Pallas swept out of his presence, attended by a throng of obsequious clients, contented himself with the dry remark that "he supposed Pallas was now going duly to swear himself out of office." In his place Nero appointed a freedman, Claudius, of Smyrna, long employed at Court in minor offices. It is a proof of the growing importance and dignity of these posts in the purely Imperial Civil Service, that this Claudius subsequently married a patrician lady named Etrusca, and his son could therefore bear the honourable title of Claudius Etruscus. More circumspect than Pallas he confined himself to the numerous financial duties of his department, and shunned politics altogether. Hence he retained his Ministry long after Nero's death, and was raised by Vespasian to equestrian rank. He died at a ripe old age in A.D. 92.[1]

If Pallas retired with his gains undiminished and not ill-content, Agrippina was not equally placable. Her wrath at the dismissal of her servant was unbridled. Despairing of entreaty, well-nigh insensate with rage, the furious Empress actually thought she could unmake where she had made, and undo the effect of her former crimes by invoking the victims of them. It was not in her nature to conceal her anger. Gesticulating with passion she uttered threats and imprecations, conceived perhaps rather in the instant fury of the moment than of serious intent, and yet challenging the security and alarming the fears of the Prince, her son, and his counsellors alike. "Britannicus," she declared, "now come to man's estate, was true heir to his dead father's power, ousted from it by an intruder, an adopted son who used his position only to heap insults on his mother. She would disclose the secrets of the unhappy house. Thanks to the gods and to her own forethought, Britannicus yet lived. The camp should listen to the appeal of the daughter of Germanicus. *Then* let Burrus, the feeble and maimed, and Seneca, the pedant, claim the government of the world." It was no comedy that Agrippina was playing, but a tragedy of angry prelude and grimmer ending.[1]

[1] See note at end.

§ 4. The Death of Britannicus

It was not to be expected that at any time in their lives the relations between Nero and Britannicus could be friendly. On the one side was the natural indignation of one who saw himself deprived of his due position and rightful inheritance; on the other, the suspicion and dislike felt towards a defeated competitor by one who cannot admit to himself the justice of his own success. But the hostility slumbered for the few weeks which followed Nero's accession, until the younger lad's indiscretion, and, still more, Agrippina's selfish madness and direct challenge to her son, issued in the tragic event which that scandal-loving age hastened to embellish with details of added horror, details as improbable as they are incapable of disproof.

During the festivities of the Saturnalia in the mid-December following Nero's coming to power, a merry party in the palace after feasting well, took to playing the game of king's forfeits. One of the company was chosen king by casts of the dice and the others had in turn to obey his commands, which were, as in our English children's game, often fantastic and mirthful. The king's lot fell aptly to the young Prince Nero, and, after others had paid their forfeits in divers ways, he called upon Britannicus to step forth into the midst of the players and sing them a song. There may have been a spice of boyish malice in this, for the younger lad was not very used to society, whether sober or riotous, and there was hope of sport from his bashfulness. But he sang bravely and well, and, as the singer continued, the silent listeners marked but too clearly the song of his own fortune and spoilt life. For he chose the lament of a child expelled from its father's home and stripped of its father's goods:

"Quid petam praesidi aut exsequar? quove nunc
Auxilio exili aut fugae freta sim?
Arce et urbe orba sum. Quo accidam? Quo applicem?
Cui nec arae patriae domi stant. . . .
O pater, O patria, O Priami domus,
Saeptum altisono cardine templum!
Vidi ego te, astante ope barbarica,
Tectis caelatis laqueatis,
Auro, ebore instructam regifice!"[1]

The harsh lines of the rugged old poet struck home. It was night; the revelling had been deep; the company was in

[1] See note at end.

no state to conceal its feelings. The pathos of the song and the singer touched them, and Nero, left alone, brooded over the scene, the pity excited, the quick intelligence and resourcefulness of his erstwhile rival. Yet danger seemed remote, till on a sudden, but a few weeks later, his own mother threw down the gauntlet of defiance, and Agrippina herself championed Britannicus' cause.

The scale of his decision was turned. There could be no safety for him so long as his half-brother lived. Poisons were easily obtained. Locusta had her "laboratory on the Palatine."[1] Britannicus, and by Agrippina's own care, was surrounded by agents of the ruling Prince, who scrupled nothing at any deed of treachery or violence.

The day after the younger Prince's birthday, February 14th, A.D. 55, the attempt was made. But the poison was too weak, and Nero, in anger and alarm, bade the poison-mixer make him a more deadly drug, beating her with his own hands in his impatient disappointment at her earlier failure. In a room hard by the Emperor's private chamber the second philtre was prepared, and the Prince satisfied himself by experiment on animals of its more deadly nature.

That night he, with Agrippina and Octavia, feasted with many guests at the palace. Britannicus and other sons of noble families reclined at a table near his own. At Britannicus' side was Titus, Vespasian's son. The attendant handed the Prince a cup, harmless as yet, for the taster must needs sip it, and suspicion must be baffled. But it was of set purpose over hot, and the boy called for cold water. In the water was mixed the poison. He drank, and passed the cup on to his neighbour. As Titus sipped it, Britannicus fell back lifeless.

The confusion among the diners was great. Some sprang up and hurried from the table. Others more wisely kept their places and looked anxiously towards the Emperor. Nero lay calmly on his couch and feigned ignorance of his brother's state. It was but one of his usual epileptic seizures, he declared reassuringly, and Britannicus had been subject to them from his infancy; sight and sense would speedily come back to him. But Agrippina's hardly dissembled terror told another tale. Yet she mastered it. Octavia too had even so early learnt to conceal her griefs. A brief silence fell upon the Hall. Then the revelry began once more.

[1] Latour St. Ybars.

Meanwhile the dead boy's body was hurried with scant pomp to the funeral pyre in the Campus Martius. Already they had begun to make it ready before he had entered the dining-hall:

> "Indeed we heard how near his death he was
> Before the child himself felt he was sick."

On a night dark with fiercely-lashing rain, wherein men saw token of the wrath of Heaven for a crime condoned by man, the obsequies of Claudius' only son were hurried to their end. The silent humble crowd gathered on the flat muddy parade ground served him for the procession of noble kin; the rushing sobbing river for eulogy. And his slayer and supplanter, a lad scarce older than himself, feasted contentedly on the Palatine hard by.

An Imperial edict next day justified the haste and claimed the people's sympathy for a prince "deprived of a brother's aid, now left alone to bear the fortunes of a noble House." Upon his closer friends Nero showered riches and lands, "dividing the spoil," it was muttered, "or bribing them to silence."

This is the story of Britannicus' death, which I have set forth without the added horrors which men then whispered awe-struck to one another and those in later days believed.[1]

The deed was from first to last based on supposed political necessity. In very truth none could tell to what lengths Agrippina's anger would not carry her. It is therefore at least probable that Seneca was cognisant of the scheme, if he did not propose it, to avert the danger which seemed to threaten the State. The road of political expediency is a slippery one. Once set upon it and it is hard to turn back.

Ten months later Seneca published his Treatise on Clemency, which he addressed to Nero. In fervour and eloquence it is second to none of his works. "Thou hast set before thyself, Nero, an end which no other prince has attained, even Innocence. Thy goodness provokes neither ingratitude nor envious criticism. No friend was ever so dear to friend as thou art dear to the people of Rome. Hard were it for such goodness to be feigned; impossible to wear a mask for long. Great were the stakes at issue while still it remained uncertain what end thy noble nature would seek to attain.

[1] See note at end.

But risks and difficulties have vanished. The people's prayers are answered. There is mercy open and promised to men's shortcomings. . . .

"So let the prince show mercy to his people. A gentle rule is like a calm and sunny day: a cruel is as the fury and thick darkness of the storm. . . . A fierce light beats ever on your greatness. Are you angry? Who does not tremble? Do you punish? All round the victim are shaken. . . . The cruelty of a monarch increases the number of his foes by destroying them. Augustus by pardoning Cinna, conspirator against his life, won himself one of the most stalwart of his friends. By the clemency of his old age he left an undying fame behind him. Justly therefore was he deemed a God and Father of his country. It was with sadness that he looked back upon the passions and angry heat of his youth. Yet none would dare compare his clemency with yours—his the repentance for past cruelty, yours unstained by any single drop of blood. . . . The merciful ruler is guarded by his subjects' love. Arms are but the ornament of his throne. 'Unum est inexpugnabile munimentum amor civium.' But feared and abhorred is the cruel monarch, and more savage than the beast of prey, who spares not even his own kin."[1]

Is it possible, ask the tender-hearted, that such a writer should already have condoned, such a prince perpetrated, a brother's murder? Is not the philosopher, ask the indignant, a hypocrite, the Emperor a mocking assassin? "Antiquas fratrum discordias et insociabile regnum." The crimes in the palace hurt not one whit the people in the forum, unless they should react upon their prince's character. The State might seem strengthened even at such a cost. Man sees but a short way before him and justifies his most terrible deeds. Let the dead past bury its dead pretender to the throne. Seneca may honestly praise his Prince's clemency and Nero accept the praise. If there be a sanction, whether in human wisdom or Divine command, for a righteousness which sheds no blood, they do not recognise it.

§ 5. The Fall of Agrippina

It was not enough for Agrippina that she had destroyed Britannicus and been immediate cause of the first great crime which stained Nero's own government. In her selfish folly

[1] See note at end.

she must needs strive to ruin Octavia as well. Her endearments publicly lavished upon the young unhappy Empress, her silly secret plotting, all was inexcusable. Had she sought to devise the quickest means of destruction for her step-children, she could have found none better than this commiseration. Her own punishment proves her action begotten of jealousy and not of guile. The ambition of a violent woman usurps too large a place in the history of these early months of peaceful administration and good government.

Her punishment for intended treason was consonant with the cool judgment and absence of temper which marked both Nero and his advisers. In reply to her intrigues with officers of the army, he dismissed the military guard of honour which had hitherto attended her and disbanded her German bodyguard. He deprived her of her lodgings in the palace, and gave her Antonia's house in the city. There he himself paid her visits, but surrounded by centurions, and after the cold formal greeting of a kiss at once departed. Roman society was quick to realise her fall. Few came to visit her in her loneliness and ruined pride, and these were but women, perhaps with intent of feminine mercilessness to gloat over her state. Those who met her in the streets hurried by in silence. In her country retreats they pointed at her the finger of scorn. The penalty was deserved, but hard for such a woman and after so great power to endure.

A personal foe thought that her opportunity for revenge had at last arrived. This was Junia Silana, *divorcée* of that Caius Silius whom Messalina had in old days enchanted, and once an intimate of the Empress herself. But Agrippina had later sinned against her beyond a woman's endurance. A Roman noble, Sextius Africanus, had desired Junia to wife, but the Empress had interfered, not, indeed, wanting him for herself, for Agrippina was no wanton, but afraid lest her friend's wealth should escape her reach. The lady, she told Africanus, was immodest and too old for him. The former insult might be pardoned—the latter was beyond forgiveness. Junia concealed her hatred until now ; the chance once given by her foe's degradation, she eagerly embraced the opportunity of vengeance. In her skilful plot she associated that Domitia, once wife of Crispus Passienus, and aunt to the Emperor, who had no reason to wish Agrippina well.[1] It was Domitia's freedman, Atimetus, who was entrusted with

[1] *Cf. supra*, p. 24.

its execution, and his instrument was a fellow freedman, Paris the actor, a favourite with Nero.

The plot's setting was effective enough. It was the depth of night, and Nero, flushed with wine, was waiting with impatience for Paris to come and dance before him. But Paris appeared with face of gloom and dark with counterfeit melancholy. There was a conspiracy afoot, he whispered to the Emperor, of his mother's making. There was a lad of twenty named Rubellius Plautus, of such high lineage that he was of equal descent with the Prince himself from Augustus.[1] Him Agrippina would marry, and, raising him to power, thus grasp, once more, the government of the Empire.

Despite the attendant circumstances, the gloom of the night and the actor, the character of Agrippina, perhaps the scheme reckoned over confidently upon Nero's timidity (a characteristic of which his many portraits show very little trace), so incredible was the accusation; and the very variations in the accounts discredit the tales of Nero's ready credence and undisguised terror. It is certain that Burrus and Seneca, when summoned to him, were able to persuade him to take no hasty step that night. And the daylight shone through the thin texture of the alleged conspiracy. To Burrus' stern inquiries, Agrippina replied with spirit and proud emotion. Silana, "the loose profligate"; Domitia, "whose fishponds were her hobby"; Atimetus, her "paramour"; Paris and his "mock heroics"; all fared badly under the lash of her unsparing tongue, and the absurdity of the fabricated charges became quickly apparent. "She had toiled, had suffered, had sinned for Nero's sake. Did a few hasty words, uttered in the very eagerness of her affection, condemn her spite of all?" In an interview with her son she disdained to defend her innocence or plead her services, but demanded and obtained vengeance on her foes. Silana was exiled, Atimetus executed. Only Paris' art and Plautus' certain innocence saved them. Paris soon after, through the Prince's influence, was declared of free birth by a civil court, and sued Domitia successfully for the sum wherewith he had purchased his enfranchisement. Plautus disappears from notice for five years. Domitia's later death was ascribed by writers of small credit to Nero's greed for her estates at Baiae and Ravenna. The conspiracy against Agrippina's life had been signally discomfited.[2]

Yet the very peril had at last opened even her eyes to the

[1] See Genealogical Table. [2] See note at end.

dangers of the course which she had been pursuing. She now abandoned the struggle for power and withdrew into privacy. Like the great Gothic Queen, she might complain that her "solicitude, which affection rendered anxious and severe, offended the untractable nature of her son and his subjects." More justly it might be urged on Nero's behalf, as on that of Constantine VI., seven centuries later, that "his ambitious mother exposed to the public censure the vices which she had nourished and the actions which she had secretly advised." The curious historian, still seeking for imperfect parallels, might adduce the Empress Theodora, with Michael III., her son, where the mother's "selfish policy was justly repaid by the contempt and ingratitude of the headstrong youth. At the age of eighteen he rejected her authority without feeling his own incapacity to govern the Empire and himself." For three full years we happily hear nothing more of Agrippina, and turn with relief to ask whether Nero does possess this two-fold capacity, or is but an earlier Michael or Athalaric.[1]

[1] See note at end.

CHAPTER III

Home and Provincial Administration, A.D. 55-62

§ 1. The "Quinquennium Neronis."
§ 2. Panem et Circenses.
§ 3. Finance.
§ 4. Nero and the Senate.
§ 5. The Division of Jurisdiction.
§ 6. Italy and the Italian Colonies.
§ 7. Provincial Government.
§ 8. Seneca and Suillius.

"Keep ye the law—be swift in all obedience—
Clear the land of evil, drive the road and bridge the ford.
Make ye sure to each his own
That he reap where he hath sown,
By the peace among our peoples let men know we serve the Lord!"
(Rudyard Kipling, *A Song of the English*.)

NERO

FROM A BUST IN THE UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE

Of doubtful antiquity

CHAPTER III

§ 1. The "Quinquennium Neronis"

THE Emperor Trajan often declared that the "Quinquennium Neronis"—*i.e.*, the first five years of Nero's Principate and Government—had been superior to the government of every other Emperor. This high praise by so eminent and judicious a critic is too often forgotten. Neither may we limit it to the sphere of foreign politics, wherein little was actually accomplished in these years which could extort such admiration from so ambitious a Prince. The felicity of the government of "these five auspicious years"[1] did not exclude Rome from its happy operation. Presupposing for the moment the truth of Trajan's eulogy of this felicity, we find Nero perhaps unduly deprived of the credit for it. The writers of his nation indeed have bestowed it upon him,[2] though with a more grudging hand than did Trajan. But later and alien historians ascribe it all to his ministers, and in particular to "the only one great minister under the Empire, Seneca."[3] Nero's part in it is contemned as "merely passive."[4] It is celebrated as exclusively "the ephemeral triumph of philosophers."[5] Or if any praise is accorded to the Emperor, it dwells upon his "masterly inactivity,"[1] upon the "freedom with which he allowed matters to take their natural course,"[4] which, after all, may be no small merit in a ruler. It is impossible to make a certain distribution of praise between Nero and his ministers. That Seneca and Burrus were wise and capable administrators is justly to be remembered. And it is unique in the history of the Principate to find such power and such authority vested in men of provincial origin, belonging distinctively to the middle bourgeois class, and used by them with such careful moderation. It is to the young Prince's credit as well that he will use such counsellors, disregarding the precedent of his predecessors, and

[1] Merivale. [2] *E.g.*, Suetonius. [3] Ramsay, St. Paul, p. 356.
[4] Raabe. [5] Beulé.

will trust them. If the merit of their choice be Agrippina's the greater merit of entrusting them with power is Nero's only. The employment of a Corbulo, a Vespasian and a Burrus, of a Suetonius and a Seneca, shows Nero endowed with that rare quality of fortunate and prudent princes, the power to recognise and to use merit in subordinates. And part at least of the praise for consequent felicity in peace and success in war is of a surety due to the Prince who chooses his officers and statesmen so wisely.

If this happiness were partly due as well to the uninterested carelessness by the Prince himself of State affairs, and to his desire for leisure that he may satisfy himself with other and less honourable relaxations, that happy conjunction of unfitness for the active exercise of power with dislike for its exercise is subject of congratulation to the Empire rather than of censure for the Prince, who has at least provided delegates more fit than he to govern in his name. But this popular and extreme view of Nero's early years of rule betrays both exaggeration and that predisposition of good men to condemn every act or failure to act alike on the part of one who stands at the end of his life's course convicted, at the tribunal of their conscience if not of their intelligence, of every monstrous crime. In depicting in this chapter some features of the Administration of the "Quinquennium Neronis," as this period is called, we shall follow our better ancient sources rather than our modern authorities in speaking of Nero's acts, of Nero's legislation and jurisdiction, of Nero's relations to the Senate and Magistrates of the Republic, not viewing him as the mere puppet mouthpiece of his ministers, but as a Prince who hearkened indeed gladly to their advice, but had projects and determination and discreet insight of his own. This surely does not make so great demands upon his time that he may have no leisure for those pleasurable enjoyments, the tale of which we so reluctantly withhold, even for so short a space as may be contained in a single chapter, from the censure of the moralists and the anticipated delight of their moral indignation. The subject of the Home and Provincial Administration of these years must still detain us, and with such reference in chief to its constitutional aspects, that we shall make bold at times to neglect the order and exceed the limits of strict chronology in order to complete the picture.[1]

[1] See note at end.

§ 2. Panem et Circenses

The behaviour and the contentment of the inhabitants of Rome itself had first claim on the attention of the Government. The food supply was a question of vital import. In A.D. 55 Fænius Rufus became Praefectus Annonae—*i.e.*, the Prefect charged with the supervision of the supply and distribution of corn at Rome. He was honest, able, and popular, and only quitted office in A.D. 62 on his promotion to the crowning honour of the equestrian career, the Prefecture of the Praetorian Guards Rome was entirely dependent for her food supply on corn imported from over seas, and the very peace of the city and safety of the Emperor depended on its regularity and abundance. But the absence of any good natural harbour near to Rome was then, as it is still to a lesser degree to-day, a great difficulty. There was no good natural harbour nearer than Puteoli, then the greatest of all marts in the Empire. For the vast quantities of soil brought down by the swift Tiber were, and are, always choking up the mouth and driving the sea farther and farther back. The lonely ruins of ancient Ostia crumble slowly away to-day into the yellow stream more than a mile from its mouth, and the creaking ferry boat crosses to the once flourishing harbour of Rome as Charon's craft to the city of the dead. This constant trouble caused Claudius to construct a deep basin connected with sea and river by an artificial channel cut to the north of Ostia—a great engineering work, which Trajan subsequently greatly improved. And though the new harbour of Trajan is to-day but the shallowest of reed-fringed meres, and of the Claudian basin little but a shelving bank remains, the channel is still in use by the little craft and colliers which call at the fishing village of Porto at the new mouth of the Tiber.

The main cause of all these harbour works on the Tiber was the Emperor's anxiety for the greater security of the import of corn, to enable the corn-ships to come direct to Rome, and prevent the necessity of the corn's transhipment into smaller craft at Puteoli, with the consequent risk and delays attendant on the process. The new Claudian harbour seems soon to have been found inadequate. Nero is said to have planned to "extend the walls of the city to include Ostia, and to bring the sea up thence by a trench into the old city." But this scheme was subsequently abandoned in favour

of a project in A.D. 64, of a navigable canal from Lake Avernus (which was already connected by water with the bay of Naples) as far as Ostia. This would avoid the storms which proved so fatal to the corn barges on their voyage up along the harbourless sandy Mediterranean coast of Italy. This canal was actually begun. And Nero also enlarged the harbour at his birthplace Antium, which might now serve at least as a port of refuge half way between Puteoli and Ostia, as grateful to the harassed Roman shipmen as some small Cornish harbour to the coasters and smacks of the West Country. Notwithstanding all such efforts to improve the corn trade, both shipowners and Emperor had many an anxious moment, as in A.D. 62, when a storm wrecked some two hundred corn ships in the harbour of Ostia itself, and another hundred, on their laborious way up the Tiber, were destroyed by fire. Indeed, if the corn did not come, the mob would riot. The suspicious temper of that mob is well shown by Nero's command on one occasion to throw a vast quantity of old corn, stored in the great granaries on the quays beneath the Aventine, into the river, "to keep up public confidence as to the quantity in reserve." Of course no increase of price was allowed. Only popular agitation could justify such a measure. There were capitalists, too, who were quite as prepared to make a corner in wheat, as Demetrius of Capua in spices, and a watchful prefect was needed as well as an honest one. It is doubtless regrettable that such financial astuteness might be rewarded in despotic Rome by the institution of criminal proceedings. Merchants had also to be encouraged to run the many risks of the corn trade, and Nero, therefore, issued an edict in A.D. 58, freeing from the property tax every ship engaged in the carriage of corn. He also removed the tax on provisions sold in the Forum Olitorium, the vegetable market in Rome. The people had been clamouring long since to have this abolished. Projects for harbours and canals, inducements to shipowners, an honest and efficient prefect and in the last resort extraordinary measures, all attest Nero's wise anxiety and prudent care for the food supply in Rome.[1]

The supply of water was a less urgent question, since from early days the city's aqueducts had begun to creep across the Campagna. But here, too, Nero did service to the people. While Papal Rome gave up the Aventine Hill to Saint

[1] See note at end.

Dominic, his orange-tree, and his friars, and the modern city leaves its climbing ways grass-grown, and itself by far the most beautiful of the hills of Rome—lonely as Ailsa Rock in the busy fairway of the Clyde—in the first century it and the Coelian Hill its neighbour were crowded. Claudius, in A.D. 52, had brought two great new aqueducts into the city, and their gigantic fragments still stretch out from the Porta Maggiore over the plain to the distant hills. Nero finished the work, by a triple duct from the Coelian height, one branch to the Aventine, one to the south-east corner of the Palatine, one over Dolabella's arch, northwards, towards the site of his golden house, where now the Coliseum stands. Of the two last branches, not a little of the red brickwork of Nero's building, the most perfect of all Rome's brickwork, still is left. Thus with the old aqueducts which had before supplied the hills, Coelian and Aventine should now have had pleasure in a double supply. For hitherto, as the Roman engineer sagaciously observes, "if any one supply failed, the most crowded hills went thirsty." But Nero had, it seems, used the old cisterns for his new waters, and the old supply therefore fell into disuse, until Nerva re-opened it again. As Tacitus has not deigned to notice the work, we have no epigram which would damn Nero's intentions with scornful praise.[1]

Panem et Circenses! After the feeding of the city, the games. Those of Nero's Principate were plentiful. In A.D. 57, he built in the Campus Martius a wooden amphitheatre to give more room for them. Hitherto a cohort of troops had kept order among the spectators. But at the end of his first year's rule Nero withdrew it, partly as military discipline suffered on such service, partly of curiosity to see whether the mob left to itself would behave itself peaceably. The mob did not. The claques of rival performers tore up the wooden benches, and gleefully engaged in warfare. The most scandalous of biographers, Suetonius, asks us to believe that Nero himself, by an opportune shot, damaged a praetor's head! Nero was short-sighted, and cannot have aimed at the grave magistrate. The cohort was quickly replaced, the disorderly partisans were arrested, the performers even were banished from Italy, whither they soon returned. A timely donative to the people of four hundred sesterces apiece might console them for their lost impromptu amusement. The largesse had probably been due at the beginning of the reign, but the payments

[1] See note at end.

to the guards had temporarily then exhausted the Imperial purse. Lavish of his own expenditure, the Prince was careful of his subjects'. Public banquets were prohibited. No made-dishes might be sold in cook-shops, unless made of vegetable ingredients, and the dainty messes of meat, once of so manifold a variety, had to disappear from the shopman's stone slabs. Still more grievous were the sorrows of the charioteers, whose time-honoured license of mocking and cheating the passers-by was forbidden. Thus "the police had an active time under Nero."[1] But we turn to graver topics.[2]

§ 3. Finance

Apart from the question of the corn supply, two others of finance always were pressing, the first of administrative "efficiency," the second of "taxation." Augustus' division of the Empire between himself and the Senate led naturally to a double exchequer administration and a double treasury. The old Republican Treasury, the Aerarium Saturni, was supplemented by the new Imperial private "purse," the Fiscus. The latter was maintained chiefly by the revenues of the Prince's "private" provinces and his own property—which was large—elsewhere. Out of it the Prince paid the ordinary expenses of the whole army and his civil service. This was so economically and wisely managed by the imperial finance secretary and his agents that the Fiscus rarely fell into difficulties, and the thrifty Vespasian, for instance, continued gladly to employ Nero's great finance minister, Claudius.[3] And the Emperor's "private property" was always increasing through the many bequests left to him. This was the more fortunate, as the old State Treasury was always labouring in a heavy sea of distress. The provinces which supplied it with revenues, with the exception of Asia, were not rich, and it seems always to have wanted help. Nero came more than once to its assistance, as, for instance, by a subvention "to maintain public credit," in A.D. 57, of forty million sesterces; but he could also declare five years later that he had "bestowed on the Republic" sixty million sesterces annually. The sixty millions were almost certainly a subsidy from the Emperor's "private property"—*i.e.*, the Fiscus, to the Republican Treasury.

The efficiency also of the Aerarium administration had long been somewhat unsatisfactory. It was the "Republican"

[1] Schiller, p. 422. [2] See note at end. [3] *Cf. supra*, p. 64.

Treasury, and therefore ought to have been administered, as under the Republic, by the quaestors. But these were young and inexperienced men just beginning public life, and the exchequer demanded wiser heads. Preceding emperors had in a variety of ways tried to reconcile the claims of efficiency with the theory of the constitution as instituted by Augustus, but without great success. Let the Senate appoint its officers, in accordance with that theory, and whether, despairing of their quaestors, they appointed by election or lot special prefects or ordinary praetors, they did not seem able to produce a smoothly-working system. Claudius gave the administration back to the quaestors, with a three years' term of office instead of the ordinary one year. But the three-year quaestors still had the blemish of youth, and in A.D. 56 the tribune Helvidius Priscus prosecuted one of them, Obultronius Sabinus by name, for a harsh distraint upon the poor. Nero therefore altered the system once more, and himself for the future appointed as prefects of the treasury men who had been praetors. This was as great a boon to efficiency of administration as it was a blow to the theory of the dyarchy; for the imperial selection of its officers involved a large imperial control in practice over the State treasury. Nero's action was therefore an infringement of his promised policy; but something must occasionally be sacrificed to efficiency, though the sacrifice be of some principle which may be a cherished idol of politicians. And the Romans, not being hysterical, bore this sacrifice with calm equanimity. Nero, who in A.D. 62 appointed a special commission of three consulars to superintend the public taxes due to this treasury, evidently regards it and its concerns as no less matter for his supervision than the Fiscus.[1]

The question of taxation in general had long before this engaged the young Emperor's attention. Augustus had remodelled and simplified the whole system—instituting two great direct taxes, a land tax and a property tax, on the whole Empire, whether composed of citizens or aliens, exclusive only of Italy, which did not pay the taxes, and a few provinces which paid a poll tax instead of the property tax. The permanent grievance of the provincials under the Republic had been the exactions of the tax-farmers, the "publicani," capitalist companies who purchased the taxes from the State at a lump sum, and collected afterwards as much as they could squeeze out of the unhappy provincials. But Augustus,

[1] See note at end.

to the fixed taxes at a fixed rate per cent., added a census or assessment of property and land by high imperial officials, and the collection of the amount due upon such assessment was entrusted directly to the State financial agents in the provinces, the quaestors and the procurators. The activity of the "publicans" was therefore limited to such indirect taxes as were still levied, such as, in particular, the customs or Portoria, which were rigorously exacted on the frontiers. Nor was there any free trade within the Empire, additional customs dues being paid at every Italian port and on provincial frontiers. When practically the whole civilised world forms one Imperial State, the strength of the argument for an Imperial Zollverein, if not the attractiveness of the idea, is diminished.

Nero, however, in the year A.D. 58, conceived and propounded to his Council the startling idea of the abolition of all indirect taxation of every kind. It was a policy of free trade within the Empire, which is indeed novel in the history of ancient economy, and a remarkable idea for a young prince not yet twenty-one. The scheme indeed betrays the generous but ill-considered impulsiveness of youth. The Emperor fixed his eyes on the welcome with which the news of the annihilation of customs and publicans together at one stroke of the pen would be received alike in Italy and the provinces, while the very populace of Rome would be pleased to be relieved of a minor tax or two. That it was his own scheme is proved by the consternation it produced in his Cabinet. His advisers pointed out to him the great loss of revenue which was bound to follow. No word seems to have been said as to the necessary consequence of the abolition of indirect—viz., the increase of direct, taxation. But this could scarcely have been avoided, in which case Nero's hopes of popularity—were such his motive in his proposed reform—would have been sorely baffled. For, granted—as grudgingly as you please—the need for money, the people would always prefer indirect to direct taxation so long as bread and salt stay cheap, and the big loaf placard must be disposed of in the rubbish heap, however enthusiastic the politician may be. The capitalists, too, who purchased the taxes and saw their profits threatened, added their opposition to the scheme. Direct and indirect taxation must be combined, and, this once granted, the Augustan scheme was the best. It would of course have been no infringement of this principle had Nero attained his minor

object of abolishing the publicani by substituting the direct collection of the customs by the State for the indirect by the agents of private capitalists. But this would have meant the creation of an army of new small imperial officials, besides a bewildering dislocation of all the accounts of the Finance Bureaux, and Nero did not propose this more moderate scheme, which indeed works badly enough in modern Italy. Reluctantly he abandoned the whole idea, and contented himself with issuing stringent edicts for the better control of the tax-farmers. The regulations concerning every tax were to be clearly posted up in some public place. No claims once dropped could be revived after a year's interval. Suits against the publicani were to take precedence of every other, both in Rome and in the provinces. The rewards hitherto paid to the accursed class of informers—delatores—were reduced to one-fourth of their original amount. And all soldiers were to keep their immunity from such taxation, unless they were engaged in trade, when it was of course only fair that they should be liable as well. And certain illegal dues, hitherto levied by the "publicans," were once and for all abolished.

Such particular enactments were not without their value, even though the financial revolution had been still-born. If it be urged that their value depends entirely on the spirit of their administration, there was little fear that the eagerness of the Prince to check extortion in the provinces would under Nero be baffled by the supineness or dishonesty of either the Courts or the Governors. The days of the Roman Republic, for which some dreamers were still idly sighing, were past in very truth, and it is actually a Nero's financial proposals and enactments which demonstrate the fact anew and prove the well-being of the provinces under the new régime which Augustus instituted.[1]

If the modern biographer and historian, rightly attaching far greater weight to finance and its relation to government than did the ancient historian or biographer, appreciate more keenly the work of the early Emperors of Rome for the safety, honour, and welfare of the Sovereign and his dominions, that appreciation must in justice be extended to Nero, and not be forgotten.

It is, however, charged against him that subsequently in his financial straits he initiated a depreciation of the coinage, the speedy result of which was "the bankruptcy which

[1] See note at end.

reached a climax in the third century."[1] The blame for this is attached to Nero's name with very little justice. In part the economic causes were beyond control. Silver flowed out Eastwards to India and to China in so unceasing a stream that scarcity, and an appreciation of the value of the metal, were the necessary consequences. For there was little export of fabrics to balance the import of Oriental wares, which were very largely imported and had therefore to be paid for in hard cash. The depreciation of the silver currency can never have been intended, as is curiously suggested,[2] to stop this outflow. It can but have been a not unnatural consequence of it. Further, Nero's monetary changes about the years A.D. 60–62, may be called rather a reform than a debasement of the existing system. Both the gold and the silver coinage diminish in weight, it is true, but the definite purpose of this was to substitute as it were a unitary for a dual coinage system in the Empire, as the new Roman coins are expressly adapted to the Greek coinage in proportional values which henceforth are easily reckoned, whereas the earlier Roman system had been irrespective of the Greek. The advantage is clear which such a change would bring, both to the Latin West and Greek East, and to the unity of the Empire as a whole, which is increased by even so small a change, and the ever threatening danger of disruption to the same small extent is diminished. "Nero's monetary system," declares a modern writer, "is the most important and the most complete of all the known monetary systems of antiquity."[3] It remained unchanged up to Caracalla. If side by side with this permanence of standard there exists the increasing tendency to depreciation of intrinsic value in the coinage, this was partly due to the reason already stated, partly to the small size of the silver coin, the drachma, now adopted instead of the bronze to be the unit of the system. It was simpler to add an ever-increasing proportion of alloy than to reduce the weight. A new "Reform Type" of the head of the Emperor makes its appearance on the new coins, and aptly illustrates the monetary reform, which may be set to Nero's credit. If he alone of all the Emperors before Aurelian entrenches on the right of the Senate, left it by Augustus, to appropriate the bronze coinage to itself, and if many such coins of Nero bear the imperial stamp alone, it may be that, as the change of standard seems to have extended to all the coins, Nero

[1] Bury, p. 285. [2] By Hertzberg, p. 250–252. [3] Soutzo, 1899, p. 11. See note.

temporarily took to himself a Senatorial right, thereby infringing once again the theory of the dyarchy, but guaranteeing the new currency through all the Empire.[1]

§ 4. Nero and the Senate

Nero's early promise to the Senate to observe the division of authority applied in the main to their respective jurisdictions. Yet the possession of legislative functions, if not the essence, is usually at least an integral and important part of Sovereignty, and Augustus had realised this when he practically constituted two co-ordinate legislative authorities in the Empire, the Senate and himself. True, Laws—Leges—still resided only in the competence of the popular Assembly. But this was now a mere shadow of an institution acting as formally as ever did the Comitia Curiata in the last days of the Republic. Enactments "with the force of laws" took their place, and these consisted of Senatorial decrees on the one hand, of Imperial Edicts and Rescripts ("Constitutiones Principis") on the other. And the line of demarcation between the two, clearly drawn as it was as regards the source of validity, was never accurately determined in respect to the province of either's operation. In practice also the Emperor as Princeps Senatus had, if present at the meeting of the Senate, a determining voice in its deliberations if he chose. The theory of the dyarchy could only be realised in practice through constant encouragement of the Senate by the Princeps to act without him, by his abstention from its meetings, or by silence if he attended. "A King, when he presides in Counsell, let him beware how he opens his owne Inclination too much, in that which he propoundeth; for else Counsellours will but take the Winde of him; and instead of giving free Counsell, sing him a song of Placebo." Bacon's learning may well have passed the early Roman Principate in its review.

No Prince could be expected entirely to achieve this self-obliteration. A Prince like Claudius forgot it altogether, and was correspondingly unpopular. It added to Nero's early popularity that the Senate was encouraged to act on its own responsibility, and successfully resisted Agrippina's attempts at coercion.[2] True, the measures it then passed were neither important in themselves nor successful in the issue. The Quaestors-designate continued to give gladiatorial shows,

[1] See note at end. [2] *Cf. supra*, pp. 58, 59.

although expressly relieved of the necessity. The advocates forbidden to receive fees or gifts continued to accept them. But, as a French writer observes,[1] frivolous questions naturally found favour because more important ones might be perilous. And the Senate could plume itself on the brave exercise of free discussion. It was only unkind critics who could mock a senator of repute if he attended and contributed to such debates, and attack him as treasonable if he chose to stay away and not waste his time. Unhappy senators! The ridicule was better, on the whole. It proved in effect true that while Augustus "restored the dignity, he destroyed the independence of the Senate."[2] But it was a trait much admired in a Prince if he sought to insist on the dignity and conceal the loss of independence, so far as this was possible.

Nero must be credited with some attempts in both directions. He sought to increase the honour both of the Senate as a whole and of its individual members. To poor nobles, Valerius Messala, Aurelius Cotta, Haterius Antoninus, he assigned in A.D. 58 yearly pensions. He entrusted letters to be read in the Senate not to the young quaestors, as had been the custom, but to the consuls themselves. No class again, as has been said, was more unpopular at Rome than that of the freedmen. They were wealthy and arrogant. Men complained that they took delight in insulting their former masters and challenging them insolently to seek redress at law. They swarmed in the city, recruited the police cohorts, filled the minor magisterial offices. Not a few knights and even senators traced their origin back to them. Their pride Nero set out to humble. He forbade their sons entrance into the Senate. Those who had already gained admission were excluded from every greater magistracy. Yet he did not permit the popular dislike of freedmen to exceed due limits. Some at least there were who could yet show "a great example of devotion" to their former masters, as that freedman of Octavius Sagitta, the tribune, who, when his master stabbed his false mistress Postumia to the heart, avowed himself the author of the act to save Sagitta's honour. And the proposal made in A.D. 56 in the Senate that masters should be permitted, for ingratitude shown, to revoke their deeds of enfranchisement, though very strongly supported, was not put to the vote until Nero's pleasure could be known. He, after debating the question in his Cabinet, replied that

[1] Beulé, p. 342. [2] Gibbon, cap. 3.

such general license of revocation was inexpedient, and that any particular case of grievance against a freedman must be tried on its own merits carefully. The decision was a wise one. It was enough to exclude their sons from the Senate, without condemning the whole class of freedmen to perpetual insecurity of status.

Later, in A.D. 60, Nero again "increased the honour of the Senate." Hitherto appellants in civil suits could apply either to Princeps or to Senate for the hearing of their case. But whereas in the former case one third of the sum in dispute or claimed as damages must needs be deposited as caution-money, which was forfeited if the appeal failed, no such deposit was demanded of litigants who chose the Senate's jurisdiction. The result naturally was that all the more frivolous cases were carried before the Senate. Nero now decreed that a similar deposit should be necessary before access to the Senate should be permitted. And thus in honour the Senatorial Court of Civil Appeal was made equal to his own.

Thus though the Senate lost its power of appointment to the Treasury, and even for a while its exclusive right of bronze coinage, its honour was not impaired, but rather increased. It was only in later years that Nero's courtesy turned to bitter hate, and that for reasons hereafter to be explained.

In legislation also the Senate took a far more active part under Nero than had been possible under Claudius. Nero had expressly instanced Italy as the Senate's province of control. And in consequence it now intervened both in matters of public order and of local municipal jurisdiction. Local jealousies led to faction fighting at Puteoli in A.D. 58, and Pompeii in A.D. 59. It was the Senate which took cognisance of the disturbances. "The Council shall hear it; it is a riot."[1] Both tribunes and aediles were made to feel the weight of its authority. In A.D. 56 certain disorderly theatre-lovers had been thrown into prison by the praetor Vibullius. But a riotous young tribune, Antistius Sosianus by name, had ordered their release. The Senate approved the praetor, and solemnly censured the tribune. The tribune's old right of auxilium, however, survived the censure for a few years longer, it being less dangerous in the exercise than that of veto. But in no fewer than three respects the Senate now placed limitations on the Tribunate. Their interference, in

[1] *Cf.* below, sect. 6.

the first place, in questions arising as to the competence of the local courts in Italian towns was prohibited. Hitherto the Roman tribune had exercised the privilege of placing his veto upon the cognisance of a case by the municipal magistrate, and in consequence of summoning the case for trial from Italy to Rome. This veto was now forbidden, as an infringement of the sole right of consul or praetor to decide any such question raised as to the competence of the local magistrate. The question was one of some importance in local life and its keen animosities. If Robert Shallow, Esquire, willed to make a Star-Chamber matter of it, what if he would not listen to his Welsh parson and mine host of the Garter? Secondly, the tribune's power to inflict a penalty was strictly limited to public places. He might not any longer act in his official capacity comfortably in his own house. And lastly, no fine imposed by the tribune was to be registered at the Treasury until four months had elapsed, and during the interval appeal against the fine might be laid before the consuls. If the Tribunate rapidly became the most shadowy of Republican institutions under the early Principate, the Senate's free action was in part responsible for this.

Similarly under the Principate the institution of the city prefecture and of the prefecture for the regulation of the corn supply had deprived the old Republican officer, the aedile, of many of his powers and duties. Now again in A.D. 56 the Senate stepped in to limit a small right of jurisdiction still left to him, by fixing the maximum amount for which he might distrain upon the property of offenders, and of the fine which he was empowered to impose upon them. The still independent jurisdiction of the minor Republican magistrates, alike in the city and in the municipalities of Italy, was controlled by the Senate, not by the Princeps, under Nero's rule. "Manebat quædam imago Reipublicæ."[1]

And yet it was little better than an image which remained of the Senatorial independence and power of old Republican days. Besides the natural fear of every individual senator to run counter to the Emperor's will, if he could only discover it, in two respects the Senate became dependent on the Emperor, and lost initiative. Its strength was constantly recruited by ex-magistrates, the office of quaestor giving a right to a seat in the Senate, and though since Tiberius the magistrates, including probably the consuls, were elected in and by the Senate

[1] See note at end.

(the people no longer having any voice in the matter save that of formal ratification and approval), yet practically this right of choice amounted to very little. For all posts, at least up to and including the praetorship, the Princeps had the right of "commending" a certain number of candidates, who were, thereby, *ipso facto* elected. And for every post not so filled up the Emperor could "nominate" candidates, and, although he only shared this right with the Consuls, no imperial nominee was likely to be rejected. Still another method of control is aptly illustrated by Nero's action in A.D. 60. In that year there was keen competition for the office of praetor, and no fewer than three candidates too many presented themselves for election. To allay the unwonted excitement, the wary prince, following in this a precedent set him by Tiberius, appointed three of the candidates promptly to the command of legions. Thus anything but a formal election was now impossible.[1] The incident is amusingly illustrative, not only of the power of the prince to dictate the personnel of his nominal partner in the Empire, but also of the close connection between civil and military life which still made of Rome the strongest military power of the ancient world. But such action on the part of the Emperor was a real control of the Senate's independence. "The principles of a free constitution are irrecoverably lost when the legislative power is nominated by the executive."[2]

There are also signs under Nero of an extended use of the Imperial Cabinet, which was damaging to the prestige, if not to the power, of the Senate. Not that the Cabinet, the "Consilium Principis," had at this, or at any time in the first century, any formal official existence as part of the Constitution. Though very precisely constituted by Augustus and by Tiberius, it remained a merely consultative body of those friends of the Emperor whom he might choose to summon to give him counsel, and any others he might desire to have added either by lot or by nomination of the Senate. Nero probably selected the entire Cabinet himself. Naturally such councillors were largely senators of tried experience and wisdom, and thus the Cabinet came in due course to be a body called together by the Princeps to consult beforehand on matters to be submitted to the Senate, or on those with which the Senate had no concern, or to deliberate on those already under discussion by the larger and more cumbrous

[1] See note at end. [2] Gibbon, i. c. 3, p. 60.

body. Thus, the debate on the insolence of the freedmen was held in the Senate in Nero's absence. However unanimous the feeling displayed, the consuls therefore "did not dare" to put the matter to the vote, although their constitutional right to do so was absolute. They adjourned the debate, and wrote to Nero to learn his wishes. He discussed the question with his Cabinet, and, as a result of their joint deliberations, advised the Senate to refrain from passing any general decree. The advice was, of course, obeyed. Again, two years later, in A.D. 58, Nero proposed his Free Trade Scheme to his Cabinet, and abandoned it upon its unfavourable reception there. The discussion of such a scheme hardly fell within the competence of the Senate as a whole. And at the end of the reign, when news came to Rome of Vindex's revolt in Gaul, Nero called his Cabinet together, but laid the matter before neither Senate nor people.

This Imperial Cabinet grew in reputation and importance, until finally Hadrian gave it a definite organisation and a constitutional status of the utmost value as a Privy Council with the highest judicial functions. The growth of such a new element in the Constitution, even in its earlier stages, could not but be at the expense of older elements, and the Senate was chief sufferer in this respect.[1]

Slowly but surely the gap separating the Principate from the Republic and the institutions of the Republic widens. Yet there were well-nigh innumerable bridges thrown over that gulf by the genius of Augustus, and they fell only one by one into the river of necessity rushing beneath. The Principate of Nero revealed a little more clearly the final separation to come. Yet the whole tone of his early administration was essentially that of a moderate Conservatism. Nothing exemplifies this better than a notable case which engaged the anxious attention both of Senate and of Princeps in A.D. 61.

There can never have been any age when the slave seemed more indispensable to civilisation and to the whole structure of society than he did in the age of Nero. The meanest Roman householder kept his handful of slaves, while the domestic slaves of the noble were counted by the hundred. Since the ruder days of Roman family law were past, the Roman had never taken kindly to any theory of slavery save that which regarded the slave as a chattel of his master, without rights, or privileges, or any real security of person or of property.

[1] See note at end.

The chattel, however, being animate, certain precautions were necessary. It is not to be doubted that very many slaves in Rome had kind masters, and lived happily enough. The very numbers and wealth of the freedmen prove that their chances of enfranchisement as of riches were not small. The Aristotelian defence of slavery, as being an institution more beneficial in a large number of actual cases alike to slave and to master than freedom, is by no means to be at once destroyed by impatient, careless, or hysterical tirades concerning the rights of man—which Aristotle would at once have applied in defence of the institution (if one man has a right to be free, why may not another have an equal right to be a slave?)—or by appeal to Christian tradition, which, as applied, long permitted, and in cases approved of, slavery. To be able to condemn it root and branch, we must not only make reference to many long centuries of past experience, but we must also be prepared to draw very formidable bills of faith upon the future, making hypotheses which neither "the peripatetic doctrine of discontinuous civilisation" nor the practical Roman was inclined to admit or consider. The Roman State at least troubled itself little with such theses. Slaves might be dangerous. They must then be rigorously punished. It was, in fact, an old law of Republican times that if a slave murdered his master, not only the murderer, but the whole number of his fellow slaves who were actual dwellers in the house, should be forthwith put to death. The cause of the murder, the guiltlessness at least of those who had no part in it, mattered not one whit.

Public opinion acquires humanity more quickly than law expresses the change of feeling. A glaring instance of the law's severity roused popular indignation against it in A.D. 61 to fever heat. The city prefect, one Pedanius Secundus, was murdered by one of his slaves. While the Senate was considering the matter, an excited crowd surrounded the Senate-house, clamouring for some relaxation in the rigour of the law. As man to man, in Seneca's phrase, the slave had had a grievance against the prefect. But, besides, the whole slave "family" in this case numbered some four hundred persons, with women and children among them. Were these all to be butchered by the law? The crowd angrily demanded mercy.

Within the walls of the Senate-house an old jurist, Caius Cassius, pleaded for the observance of the law. Slaves were no longer, he urged, parts of the household, of kindred feelings with their master. They were the very refuse and sweep-

ings of the nations; their sole religion, had they any creed at all, was some debased Oriental superstition. In terrorism alone lay any hope of security for the Roman master. And if some innocent must perish, this were a small matter compared to the general interests of society.

The value set to-day on human life is very modern. If a modern Saul to-day slew his tens and a David his hundreds, he would be cursed as a butcher by his foes, and regarded with some horror and probably superseded by sentimental democrats. For good or for evil, the ancient world had no such qualms. The Senate by a majority condemned the four hundred to death, and went comfortably home to dinner.

There remained the Emperor. Would he interfere? He had signed his first death-warrant presented to him by Burrus with the most obvious reluctance. "I would I had never learned to write," he had muttered with chagrin, when the praetorian prefect refused to suffer further delay. If he had sought to spare two robbers, would he not intervene for the four hundred innocent persons? Seneca, too, his minister, had lauded his desire for mercy in the earlier case in a paean of ecstatic admiration. And Seneca had very different views on slavery from those expressed by a Cassius. "'Tis savage pride," he wrote, "which quotes the proverb, 'As many foes as slaves.' They are no foes to us until we make them so." "Slaves, do I say? Rather, 'Men.' Slaves? No, but comrades. Slaves? Say rather, humble friends. Nay, slaves if you like, but fellow-slaves with you, who own one arbiter of destiny, fate. See your modern master, deeming it a disgrace if no throng of slaves surrounds his couch at dinner. Poor wretches! Flogged for a murmur, a cough, a sneeze, a sigh. In olden times slaves who might speak not only in presence of, but even face to face with, their masters, were found ready to lay down their lives for their masters' sakes. They chatted at feasts, but were silent under torture. To-day, the proverb—to our shame. Is not a slave of the same stuff as are you his lord? Doth he not enjoy the same sun, breathe the same air, live, die, as you? Let your slave worship you rather than dread you. Is that too little for a master which is enough for God, who accepts worship and love? For love casts out all fear." "Shall a slave be counted as one that can do benefits to his lord? Surely. Virtue recks not of birth but of purpose. She resides not in the person, nor nobility in the pedigree. She deals not with citizen or slave,

but rests content with man as man. Scorn not any man. The Universe is common parent of us all."

Seneca was still Nero's minister. Would he not brave the Senate's anger, and spare the four hundred?

True, the Stoic view was ridiculed. "'Friends,' quoth he, 'our slaves are men: they've drunk one and the same milk. Even though luck is rough on 'em, let 'em have bite and sup wi' us.'" The drunken good-natured sot Trimalchio of the romance does but express Seneca's own views and his identical conclusion. But the master-hand has drawn the picture of the Roman Falstaff to hold him up to the ridicule and amused disgust of Roman society.[1] To ask your slave to dinner was vulgar low taste, at which all polite society shuddered. Drunken good-nature won more dinners for the hungry Roman slave than all the preachings of philosophy.

And Nero refused to intervene. Nay, when the mob threatened violence, he published a stern edict of reprimand, and the way, along which the four hundred went to their death, was lined with the Imperial Guards.

This was no innate cruelty on the Emperor's part. He refused to disregard law and custom, or interfere with the Senate's expressed will. He regarded himself rather as the executive power charged with the execution of the Senate's decree. To neglect the Senate's wishes, to rest idle when it was itself prevented from carrying its legal sentence into effect, prevented too by the turbulent rascality of the slums, this would indeed have implied a broken pledge and promises disregarded. And all for a handful of slaves, or, possibly, an old philosopher's urging? It is far more probable that Seneca approved his action (though he could hardly have voted with the majority in the Senate), than that he objected to it. Political considerations were always more important than the application of philosophical dogmata. Nero's was a moderate Conservatism, and he sought to live in harmony with the Senate. Thus when Varro proposed to exile all Pedanius' freedmen from Italy, Nero promptly forbade it outright. Custom—the Mos Antiquus—still words to conjure with in Rome—never gave precedent for this, as it did for the slaughter of the slaves. It was to Nero a case for the simple administration of the law. Nor mercy nor anger had any part in it. It is probably under Nero that slaves with complaints against

[1] Petronius: *Cf. infra*, Chap. IX., sect. 5.

their masters were first permitted to carry them before the City Prefect. This boon to the slaves may have been due to this very incident of Pedanius' murder. But break with custom to affront the Senate, Nero would not. And his refusal is typical of his relations with that Council of State.[1]

§ 5. The Division of Jurisdiction

The Princeps was an authority with supreme jurisdiction both direct and appellate in cases both civil and criminal. In civil cases his jurisdiction was co-ordinate with that of the ordinary Republican magistrate with imperium, the praetors in direct, the consuls in appeal, cases. His power of hearing any case directly on request made to him, or any appeal from Courts whose decision was subject to appeal, was unlimited. But he exercised it at first sparingly. In criminal jurisdiction, his authority was equal to that of the Consuls and Senate sitting together, and superior in practice and prestige to that of the old Quaestiones perpetuae which continued to exist. There was no appeal from either of the higher Courts to the other. Practically, the Princeps could take cognisance of or exercise a determining influence upon any case he chose, either civil or criminal, since even if a case did not come before him in the first instance, his power of veto and maius imperium enabled him to interfere with any magistrate, his seat in the Senate enabled him to control the course of any trial before that body, his revision of the list of judices and the possibility of his attendance at any trial enabled him to keep a secure hold of the quaestiones. He could always delegate his jurisdiction in any case or class of cases to any selected person or persons, either allowing or expressly excluding appeal to himself against the sentence of his representative.

Nero from the first was anxious to avoid the error into which his predecessor had fallen, of too great eagerness to avail himself of his extensive powers of interference with the ordinary course of justice. His early promise not to appropriate suits to his own cognisance was not forgotten. And where the division of judicial authority between Magistrates and Senate on the one hand, and Princeps on the other, depended as much on the choice of the latter as on custom, the line of demarcation between their respective spheres of authority never being precisely drawn, the activity of Magis-

[1] See note at end.

trates and of Senate was proof of the Prince's desire to observe the principle of the dyarchy.

Thus in the suits against provincial governors, the Senate as a rule listened to complaints coming from the public provinces, the Princeps to those from the imperial. Cestius Proculus, governor of Crete, is tried before the Senate in A.D. 56; Sulpicius Camerinus, and Pompeius Silvanus, of Africa, similarly in A.D. 58; Pedius Blaesus of Cyrene in A.D. 59; Tarquitius Priscus of Bithynia in A.D. 61. If Nero hears the prosecution of Publius Celer by the province of Asia in A.D. 57, this was because Celer was his own financial procurator in the province, and not its governor or quaestor. And the trials of the governor of Sardinia, Vipsanius Laenas, in A.D. 56; of the governor of Lycia, Eprius Marcellus, in A.D. 57; and of Vibius Secundus, procurator of Mauretania, in A.D. 60, doubtless were heard by him, the three provinces being imperial. Yet the possible interchange of jurisdictions is seen as well. Cossutianus Capito, specially appointed by Nero to Cilicia as his province, is condemned for extortion by the Senate in A.D. 57. Camerinus and Silvanus in A.D. 58 owed their acquittal to Caesar, since he was present in the Senate at their trial and voted first in their favour.

Similarly in non-provincial cases, Nero shares the jurisdiction but takes the smaller half, at least of the suits of which there is record. Aediles take cognisance of minor suits under control of the Senate; consuls, praetors, and, for a while, tribunes, of appeals against the jurisdiction of local Italian magistrates.[1] Paris wins his case against Domitia[2] before a Judex, although the favour of the Emperor is said to have determined the verdict of the Court. Treasury suits go before Reciperatores, as in the days of the Republic. Appeals in civil suits were possible alike to the Senate and to Nero, as has been already stated.[3] In criminal jurisdiction, Octavius Sagitta, in A.D. 58, was tried for murder before the Consuls and Senate.[4] Valerius Fabianus and some fellow forgers were condemned in A.D. 61 by the Senate, though here too Cæsar intervened by entreaty to secure the acquittal of Marcellus, one of the defendants. Two trials of the year A.D. 62 are interesting in this connection. Fabricius Veiento was accused of publishing a libel on the Senators and Priests. The Senate would naturally have taken

[1] *Cf. supra*, p. 88.
[2] *Cf. supra*, p. 70.
[3] *Cf. supra*, p. 94.
[4] *Cf. supra*, p. 86.

cognisance. But when his accuser added a charge of the sale by him of imperial favours, Nero at once took over the hearing, condemned the accused, banished him from Italy, and burned the scurrilous pamphlet. In this case the right of the Emperor to appropriate any case to his own cognisance in which he himself is in any way involved is made clear. But that Nero refused to exercise the right on occasions appears from the second case. Antistius Sosianus, the riotous tribune of six years previously,[1] was prosecuted in the Senate for High Treason on the score of some biting pasquinades which he had recited against the Emperor in a friend's house. The case was heard in Nero's absence, and, after a vigorous debate, the milder sentence of banishment was passed upon him. But the Consuls did not dare carry out the sentence without consulting the Emperor. Nero's reply betrayed annoyance. "The offence," he wrote, "was undoubtedly serious, and entirely unprovoked. The penalty should justly be appropriate to the magnitude of the crime. But, as he would have intervened to prevent too great severity, so he placed no obstacles in way of their desire for lenity. They might if they liked even acquit the accused."

Antistius therefore escaped with exile. Nero's action is praiseworthy. He lets the Senate alone and free to decide in a case where he alone is the aggrieved party. He permits another, his rival, the "leader of the opposition," Thrasea the Stoic hero, to win the credit for mercy which he himself had hoped to acquire. Short of vetoing the whole prosecution, which only an Augustus might have done, Nero's action is as creditable as the most exigent critic or constitutionalist could require. And if, in A.D. 65, the Pisonian conspirators are tried privately by Nero, the Senate was so deeply involved in the plot that it could hardly be trusted with its punishment.[2] And Nero subsequently published all the evidence in book form.

In his own Court, the Emperor gave his sentences with care, after a night's interval, and in writing. He also first obtained from each of his counsellors and assessors his opinion on the case in writing, and read them secretly before giving his own verdict. In fact Nero's jurisdiction, both in its methods and in the limits which in accordance with his promise he set upon its extent, and his attitude to the Senate and its jurisdiction throughout, are not unworthy either of a true successor to Augustus, or of some recognition

[1] *Cf.* p. 87. [2] *Cf. infra*, Chap. VIII., sect. 2.

of praise to-day. The imperial jurisdiction of Princeps or his delegates was bound to increase and that of Senate and magistrates to decrease. This is illustrated by a curious case in Nero's own Principate. In A.D. 61, the Senate condemned one Valerius Ponticus to exile on very novel grounds. For Nero's Senate could add to the law. Certain offenders (the ground of their offending is not stated) were like to be accused before the City Prefect, Flavius Sabinus, elder brother of Vespasian, whom Nero with his customary skill in selection had appointed five years before to that office. Any jurisdiction possessed by the Prefect was still undefined, and Ponticus interposed hurriedly with a prosecution instead before the praetor. This was within his legal rights. Yet the praetor's action being far more slow than that of the prefect, Ponticus' intention to gain time for collusion with the defendants was so obvious that he was prosecuted and condemned in the Senate for a criminal intention, not for a criminal act, unless the forestalling of more honest prosecutors could be counted as such. And a clause was added to the Senatus Consultum Turpilianum, then just passed on the subject of forgery, that such offences in future should be treated as was that of false accusation in an ordinary criminal suit.

This case marks the growth of the prefect's power at the expense of the praetor's, which is characteristic of the first two centuries of the Principate. Yet the decision is the Senate's, and the whole trial is thus aptly significant of the division of jurisdiction which Nero promised, permitted, and approved.[1]

§ 6. Italy and the Italian Colonies

Next to Rome and the central administration, Italy claims notice. Nero's early attention here was called for by two problems—the one of disorder, the other of depopulation.

The first was a small matter. There were, as has been said,[2] disturbances at Puteoli in A.D. 58 between the local Senate and the inhabitants, but these were settled by a small Senatorial Commission helped by a Praetorian cohort. Similar local jealousies produced a more serious fracas next year at Pompeii. An exiled senator, one Livineius Regulus, gave to the delighted little city an exhibition of gladiators, and the amphitheatre was filled not only by its own citizens, but also by many visitors from the little towns round. They came from Nuceria, from Puteoli, from Pithecusa—the modern

[1] *Cf.* note at end. [2] *Supra*, p. 87.

Ischia island—and from Campania generally. Local jealousy seems to have been as keen as in modern Sicily or Scotland, and high words passed, till the men of Nuceria and the men of Pompeii fell to fighting first with stones and then with actual weapons. The others joined in gleefully, Pithecusa declaring for Pompeii, Puteoli and the other Campanians for Nuceria. It was a fight worthy of Donnybrook Fair, but ending more bloodily. Fighting on their own ground, the Pompeians and their allies drove their opponents in rout from the city. The indignant men of Nuceria appealed to Rome for redress, and backed their appeal by sending the maimed bodies of their many dead to the city. Nero handed the enquiry over to the Senate, and, after an investigation by the consuls, that body decreed that for ten years Pompeii should enjoy no more shows of the kind. The local clubs which had largely caused the riot were dissolved. Livineius and others were punished with exile.

This was a melancholy day for pleasure-loving Pompeii, and each party cursed the other on the very walls of the city, curses preserved to this day by the destruction which soon after befel it. Worse was yet to come to the unhappy little town, for a great disaster, premonitory of its coming doom, befel it on February the fifth, in the year A.D. 63. For some days before the air had been strangely still. Then on the fifth a great earthquake occurred, which was felt through all Campania. Repeated shocks continued for several days. Pompeii suffered worst, the greater part of the town being destroyed. Herculaneum and Naples were badly damaged, but Nuceria escaped without loss of life. Flocks were destroyed, and many men lost control of their wits. Thus sixteen years before the last terrible eruption which blotted out Pompeii and Herculaneum from the roll of Italy's cities, Vesuvius, hitherto within Roman memory quiescent, gave warning of its wrath.[1]

To assist in the recovery of its prosperity by the town, Nero despatched a colony, probably of veteran soldiers, to Pompeii shortly after the earthquake. This was a remedy that he, following again in this the example of Augustus, applied frequently against Italy's chief danger, that of the depopulation of the smaller towns and the country districts. "Italia infecunditate laboratur." The diminishing numbers of the Italians was a very serious feature of the last two centuries of

[1] See note at end.

Roman history, and as far back as the democratic reforms of the Gracchi the legislature had attempted to stop the evil. The attempt was renewed by all the greater statesmen of Rome after them, and the Marian army reforms had supplied an increasing number of possible new settlers on lands provided by the State. Such colonies of veterans were sent, not to build new cities, but, as in the oldest days of Rome (though now with social and not military intent), to already existing towns, to recruit their numbers. Sometimes they remained for a while a separate privileged community within the town, but sooner or later amalgamation was effected, and the status of a Colony was bestowed on the whole city. Under the Empire this was the most privileged status a town could enjoy. No fewer than seven "Colonies" can be with certainty ascribed to Nero, and even though some five others are wrongly so associated with him, yet the very mistake shows the readiness with which attempts to apply this colonial remedy were associated with his name. Capua and Nuceria were strengthened by veterans in A.D. 57. In A.D. 60 the town of Puteoli, having recovered from its turbulence, asked and obtained from Nero the status of a Colony, its title henceforth being Colonia Neronensis Claudia [or Claudia Neronensis] Augusta Puteoli. Though not stated, it is not improbable that veterans were sent to the town on this occasion. This was the case in this same year with the Tarentum, and with Nero's favourite city, Antium, men of the Imperial Guard and rich non-commissioned officers being despatched to strengthen the two cities. Finally, Pompeii, to its joy, received the status of a Colony, and, in view of its losses in the earthquake, almost certainly its contingent of veterans, in A.D. 63. And about the same time the little city of Campanian Tegeanum, five miles from Nola and nine from Nuceria, whose very name has only recently been discovered, received the same treatment from Nero's hands. The colonial status of Beneventum, Aesernia, Atina, Saepinum, and Castrimoenium (the modern Marino in the Alban Hills) is also ascribed to Nero, but wrongly.[1]

It appears, however, that the scheme was not a success. The veterans made bad colonists, as all soldiers on a long service system are bound to do. Many abandoned the cities for the provinces where they had served with the standards. The rest were ill-adapted to marry and bring up children.

[1] See note at end.

One great mistake made was that the troops were chosen at haphazard from different regiments. They did not know one another, and there was nothing to make them work together. Hence when pitchforked into the same town they remained "a mere aggregate and no colony." The old plan of sending out a legion, officers and all, to constitute a city had been far more successful, though politically dangerous in the days of the Civil Wars, when rival generals collected their forces so much the more easily. But now the imperial legions were a constant quantity, permanently recruited and not disbanded, and the old plan was impossible.

None the less Nero's attempt deserves all credit as a valiant effort to do something to restore prosperity to some of Italy's decaying towns. For her colonies, as well as for her new harbour at Antium, and a great canal project, partly intended to drain the Pontine marshes (of which we shall speak later), Italy owed thanks to her young Emperor and his advisers.

Lastly, the small district of the Maritime Alps lying on the frontiers of Italy and South Gaul received as a whole the Latin franchise, which was always a half-way house towards the desirable goal of full burgess rights. And the great highway of communication which ran through this district along the Coast from Italy to Gaul, as it does still to-day, was restored by the Emperor in the year A.D. 58 from Fréjus to Aix. Probably at the same time the Alpine District to the north of this, known as the Cottian Alps, which hitherto had been formed into a little dependent kingdom, became, on the death of its King Cottius, a small Roman province administered by an Imperial Procurator. The northern frontier of Italy was steadily being Romanised, and two important steps in this direction were thus taken at Nero's instance.[1]

§ 7. Provincial Government

Nero's provincial government during the first ten years of his Principate, displayed the same qualities of carefulness and consideration which marked his home administration. And it is curiously contrasted with a survival of the old Republican attitude to the provinces which appears in his reign, and is represented by the "leader of the opposition," Thrasea Paetus, the hero of the Stoics and irreconcileables. The provincials, that is the vast majority of the Empire, would indeed not have

[1] See note at end.

gained by the substitution of Thrasea's sentimentality for the Imperial Government's cool-headed wisdom, had this substitution been for one moment possible.

The Government's general supervision of the purity of the provincial administration was shown by two regulations. The first was an imperial edict of A.D. 57, and forbade any governor to give any gladiatorial display, wild beast or other show, in his province, such being a ready means of winning interested adherents and of stifling accusations of maladministration. The prohibition is also perhaps typical of Nero's general attitude of dislike to the arena.[1] The second was a Senatorial decree of A.D. 62, passed with Nero's sanction. Hitherto it had not infrequently been the custom for the provincial council in a province to send in to the Senate a solemn decree, thanking in name of the province any proconsul or propraetor on the expiry of his year's office as governor. All such votes of thanks were now strictly forbidden, nor was any envoy to be charged with such a mission. It had been found that, as the term of his office drew near its end, the governor became over remiss and complaisant in discharge of his duties, hoping thereby to obtain this formal vote, which would, of course, serve him well in any subsequent prosecution for maladministration. The evil was naturally confined to the Senate's provinces, as the tenure of office in the imperial provinces was not of fixed duration. The Senate sanctioned the proposed prohibition with enthusiasm, and Nero in confirming it followed a precedent of Augustus, who had already tried to check the same evil, but by less stringent measures. But Thrasea's speech in its favour insisted on the "pride of the provincials." It was, he declared, only the opinion of his own fellow-citizens at Rome which ought to have the least weight in determining the merits or the action of any governor in the provinces. In old days the provincials trembled before even private citizens of Rome who visited their lands officially. Those happy days were past, and the degenerate day arrived when the Roman governor was compelled to consider the wishes and consult the feelings of the provincials whom he was sent to govern. Thrasea could dress up his sentiments in the guise of a demand for a stern and rigorous impartiality to be expected of the governor. In reality his speech remains one of the most notable justifications of the destruction of the Roman Republic which was ever spoken.

[1] *Cf. infra*, p. 127.

Happy indeed was the Roman Empire when such was the lost cause of this second Cato as it had been of the first.[1]

In the first seven years of Nero's Principate there were twelve accusations of Roman officials by the provincials for maladministration. This was an unwontedly large number, and testifies at least to the provincials' confidence that they would get a hearing at Rome. Six of the accused were condemned, of whom half were Caesar's agents. The Sardinians secured Vipsanius Laenas' condemnation in A.D. 56; the Cilicians that of Cossutianus Capito in 57; the Cyreneans of Pedius Blaesus in 59; the Mauri of Vibius Secundus, procurator of Mauretania, in 60; the Bithynians of their proconsul, Tarquitius Priscus, in 61; and one Saevinus suffered the same penalty for maladministration at some time in this period, though the circumstances of the case are not more precisely known. Five of the accused were acquitted, these being Cestius Proculus, of Crete, in 56; Eprius Marcellus, of Lycia, in 57; Sulpicius Camerinus and Pompeius Silvanus, of Africa, in 58; and Acilius Strabo, special commissioner in Cyrene, in 59. It is suggested that unfair means were adopted to secure the escape of Marcellus and Silvanus, which doubtless was a belief of the time. We cannot test its justice. The twelfth case, that of Celer, Nero allowed to drag on till the death of the accused, who was an old man. Strabo's case is interesting. The last king of Cyrene, Ptolemy Apion, had bequeathed his kingdom to Rome, and his royal domains had, in the course of a century and a-half, been largely appropriated by private landowners. Disputes arising, Claudius had despatched Strabo as special commissioner, who had evicted the unlawful possessors from their holdings. They retaliated by accusing him to the Senate. As he was an imperial commissioner, the Senate handed his case on to Nero, who very promptly acquitted him, approving of the justice of his judgments. At the same time the hardships involved were evident, and other considerations came into play. Just as in Italy, so also in Africa, there was a ruinous tendency towards the absorption of small holdings into large estates, with fatal consequences to the life and vigour of the country. Any contrary tendency must be encouraged, and Nero showed political insight as well as generosity in first confirming the justice of Strabo's decisions, and then immediately relinquishing the claim of the State on the Cyrenean

[1] See note at end.

domain lands, conceding them by imperial grant to their former supposed owners. The evil of the "latifundia" was so great that six individuals were said at one time to own the half of the province of Africa. Nero, it is said, executed the whole six, a measure which, however extreme, we cannot appraise for its justice or injustice, as no single other detail is given. But the effect of the measure may well have been salutary—presupposing for this purpose its justice, as, in the Principate of Nero, we are tempted to do. To this list of governors' trials may be added that of Clodius Quirinalis, Caesar's prefect of the second great imperial fleet, that of Ravenna. Accused in 56 A.D. of cruelty towards the Italians, "as if they had been the most barbarous of nations," he escaped condemnation at Nero's hands only by suicide.

Thus the peace, prosperity and good order of the provinces were carefully safeguarded by Nero. Frauds were detected. For example, in the first year of his Principate the Rhodians, who were greatly alarmed by a forged letter purporting to be written to them officially in the Consuls' names, appealed to Nero in the matter, and were at once reassured and comforted. Roads were repaired, as the Bithynian highway from Apamea to Nicaea in 59; and in A.D. 61, Tiberius Julius Justus, the procurator of Thrace, received the Emperor's commands to construct shops and military shelters along the military roads in his province. And lastly, the excellence of some of Nero's appointments deserves once more to be commended. Tiberius Claudius Balbillus chosen prefect of Egypt in A.D. 55; Lucius Sulpicius Galba, Nero's successor, sent in A.D. 60 to Hispania Tarraconensis; Otho even in Lusitania;—these remained for years together in their respective duties, and discharged them thoroughly and well. The new governor of Syria, P. Anteius, appointed in A.D. 55, perhaps by Agrippina's influence, was not allowed to leave Rome, since the existing governor of Claudius' selection, C. Ummidius Durmius Quadratus, was giving great satisfaction, and a strong man was needed in that most important province at a time when trouble threatened from the Parthians.[1]

These then are Nero's services to the provinces, and they are typical of the Principate. Yet this does not diminish the recognition due to the Emperor, whose forethought and activity seem indeed to have been greater than those of two at least of his predecessors. Maladministration and the risk

[1] See note at end.

of maladministration were checked by general administrative edicts, and by an abnormal number of prosecutions, the defendants in which admittedly in almost every case received the condemnation or acquittal which was their due. The operations of the greedy tax-farmers were limited severely in scope and method. Not only were good generals chosen for the great wars upon the frontiers (which will concern us later), but good governors for the peaceful provinces within them, and the peace and prosperity of the Empire remained undisturbed, save for the distant wars in Britain, on the Euphrates and in Judaea, or for natural calamities. Once more it must be repeated that, whatever the private and court scandals and crimes of the reign of Nero, the whole Empire had reason to rejoice in his good government, which extended itself equally to the administration in Rome, in Italy, and in the Provinces.

§ 8. Seneca and Suillius

Throughout these years of the Quinquennium, Seneca had been enjoying uninterrupted influence and prosperity. He had further amassed very great wealth, partly by bequests, partly by Nero's gifts, partly by the favourite Roman device of lending out money at usury to the provincials. Usury laws had long since been a dead letter at Rome. As a result of his financial skill, the philosopher acquired a fortune as large as that of Pallas. His capital was estimated at some three hundred million sesterces.

Such wealth brought with it added power, but a not-unnatural dislike as well. The philosopher, ancient and modern, is not as a rule embarrassed by a superfluity of riches, and, on Seneca's behalf, it must be urged that it was scarcely his philosophy which had reaped such a bountiful reward. The provincial debtor paid better than did the pupil, who sate at his master's feet and greedily hearkened to discourses on the indifference of prosperity to the sage. It was not then his philosophy which threatened his security through men's envy. But it lent an added sting to the attack. The philosopher was exposed to taunts, which would have rebounded harmlessly enough from the mere usurer's triple armour of steel. Virtue is an uncomfortable asset, and does not sit comfortably in the safe along side of mighty ledgers. Whence philosophy may justly congratulate herself.

In A.D. 58, the first signs of an approaching storm appeared

on the horizon of Seneca's felicity. A prosecution instituted this year under a law prohibiting advocates' fees stirred up against him in the person of the defendant a keen and dangerous opponent, who did not shrink from adding to his own peril by the hatred which he bore towards the statesman. Publius Suillius indeed, the most terrible informer in old days of all the Empress Messalina's deadly accomplices, and her chief agent in her vengeance upon the victims, had never lacked courage. He was now an old man, but men looked in vain for any diminution of his vigour, for any depreciation by humility of his earlier activity. His bitterness, roused anew by attack, demanded

> "To show its strength is still superlative
> At somebody's expense in life or limb."

And now in A.D. 58, with unsparing savagery, he fiercely denounced Seneca, and his attacks echo loudly from the pages of a later writer. "Seneca was an adulterer and a wanton. His life was but a glaring inconsistency with his teaching. He denounced courtiers and himself never left the palace; flatterers, himself the flatterer of Messalina and her freedmen; luxury, and displayed five hundred dining-tables of cedar wood and ivory; wealth, and sucked Italy and the unhappy provinces dry by usury."

This was a dangerous and uncomfortable opponent. Denounced as an "idle philosopher who traded on the ignorance of boyhood," as "the justly exiled adulterer of the Imperial house," Seneca might leave his life past and present to give the lie to such accusations. None at least could call him idle. And the past was very distant. But the attack on him for his inconsistency was a charge not so lightly disregarded. In two philosophic treatises of this year Seneca published his defence, perhaps at his friends' urging. The first of these, "On the Constancy of the Sage," was perhaps the less human, and therefore the less happily conceived. For a vaunted total indifference in virtue of his wisdom to all reproaches may seem to befit the anchorite better than the millionaire, so unreasonable are the philosopher's fellow men.

"From the heights of Stoicism—that philosophy of Manliness which braces the will and scorns effeminacy—the wise man, the 'sage,' looks down on the world beneath him, himself untroubled and unassailable. Nor injury nor insult can reach him. Invulnerable, not as one never struck but as one never

wounded for all the striking, he is as far removed from the fear of hurt as the heavens above from reach of arrows, or the depths of the sea from the fetters of enslavement. The doing does not involve the suffering of a harm, though the suffering implies the doing. Just as when in the water I need not swim, but if I swim I must needs be in the water. To feel insults, to resent them, these are marks of the mind conscious of some inferiority in itself. The sage knoweth his own greatness. There are some even who imagine insults for very lack of woes to inspire sorrow. The sage is not impassive, not callous. The death of friends, the ruin of his country, such woes he feels, even though with perfect sanity he controls his grief. But the petty woes of calumny touch him not at all. So many men are but big children, their ambitions, their achievements, like to children's toy castles of sand. Their bitter jibes are to the sage but the jesting mockery of childhood. If he punishes their offending, 'tis to remedy their petulance, not his own smart. Neither praise nor blame from high or low can affect him. For all to him are on an equal level of folly. The world of the sage is not your world. Therefore insults like missiles rebound from his armour and leave him unwounded. The victory is his. Life can still show an invincible victor over whom Fortune has no power, and the Republic of Humanity has joy thereof."

"Illum in aliis mundi finibus sua virtus collocavit, nihil vobiscum commune habentem." Truly "this Booke betokeneth a great Minde, as great a wit, and much eloquence."[1] Yet these heights of the sage are too rare for the common herd. Philosophy is but for the select. On the basis which she assigns for courage the multitude cannot build. To her consolation those that labour and are heavy laden cannot come. Stoicism was useless for the redemption of the Roman world. From these serener heights even Seneca himself descended, and in his writings elsewhere he justified more precisely the possession of riches by a philosopher. "Wealth," he concludes, "is desirable to the sage, but is never indispensable. 'Infirmi animi est pati non posse divitias.' ''Tis a weak mind that cannot suffer riches.' But the sage is ever ready to relinquish them as cheerfully as he acquires and enjoys them. Avarice, that 'vehementissima generis humani pestis,' can have no part nor lot in him. Poverty has no terrors for him. Nay, it is 'securer' (a lesson which

[1] Lipsius.

Suillius' attacks impressed upon the writer). In no straits of circumstances does the sage count himself as poor. For he alone is poor who is never content, who always wants more. And the mere necessities of life are so easy to obtain. It is but the superfluities which cost such labour to secure. Riches won by such toil are not worth the having. They are but a distress to the vessel tossed on the stormy sea of life. Yet the philosopher is not to refuse wealth if it comes to him."

At first indeed, in his special treatise on the subject, that "On a Happy Life," Seneca touches a humbler string. "Philosophers," he cries, "are not perfect. We are but striving to attain. The chains hang but a little more loosely upon us. Yet listen to men's snarling—'Why, O philosopher, dost thou think money a necessity of life? Why art melancholy at its loss? Why so sorrowful for a wife's tears, a friend's death, a foeman's slanders? Why not dine in accordance with thy precepts? Why such gorgeous plate, wine so old, pageboys so richly dressed, so apt a connoisseur to do the carving? Why are thy wife's earrings worth the ransom of a palace? Why hast thou estates over seas, more goods, more slaves, than thou canst number?'

"To such reproaches I make reply, 'Because I am not yet fully wise, but only hope some day to be. Enough for me if haply day by day I may grow wiser even by a little. Lame I may be, yet can I outrun you who chide.'

"I speak not this for myself, for I am drowned in vices" (a most rare breath of humility), "but for him who hath already gotten grounde. Have not Plato, Epicurus, Zeno, all suffered the like reproach that their life fits not well in with their teaching? Thus do the envious cast mud at great men, finding in their uprightness the condemnation of their own transgressions. If they who follow virtue be avaricious or ambitious, what pray must you be who make no effort to follow it at all? They strive to loose themselves from the cross to which each one of you nails himself. They hang but on one cross apiece, you on as many as the passions which torment you. Witty, is it, to scoff one against another? I might perchance believe it, had I not seen men from their crosses spitting upon those who beheld them.

"If philosophers fail to practise what they preach, how good a thing nevertheless it is that they practise preaching. And for his riches?—the philosopher differs from other men not in renouncing riches, but in relinquishing them without a

murmur. How much better therefore is it that he should possess them than they who mourn at wealth's departing! The wise man cannot deem himself unworthy of any of fortune's gifts. Surely riches are means of virtuous action. How can he show that he despiseth riches if he have them not to despise? How display generosity, prudence, magnanimity without them? Just as he bears sickness patiently, but would fain enjoy fair health. Pleasant are riches to the sage as the favouring wind to the mariner, or the sunny nook on a winter's day. The Stoic who avows Virtue to be Chief Good of Man declareth not thereby that there be not other lesser goods. This only is the difference between me and you. My wealth belongs to me, you to your wealth.

"All with one accord admit the use of riches. Herein lies the merit of the sage, that in the palace he sees no reason for greater self-respect, nor in the gutter for self-depreciation. He rests not the more happily for that his couch is soft, of luxury's own making; nor the more wretchedly for his bedding in the slums, a wisp of hay for the neck, under him an old rag mattress with the stuffing squeezing out through the rents. Why then may he not prefer the palace to the hovel? As no general trusts peace so securely that he makes him not ready for war, so the sage in the midst of wealth is ever equipped for beggary. Let him enjoy the present who can face any future without flinching.

"Thus your reproaches harm not the philosopher one whit. They do but mark your own depravity. His words of healing are spoken for your sake, not for his own. Why then revile the words of true wisdom, you who listen greedily to the mad outcries of any fanatic devotee? Do you chide his failings? Look upon your own, and you will have no time to mock a better man. You are like to men who sit idly in the circus and know not that the news of death lies in wait for them at home."

To this effect writes Seneca, ingenious, unabashed :—

> "I sit at my table en grand seigneur,
> And when I have done, throw a crust to the poor;
> Not only the pleasure, one's self, of good living,
> But also the pleasure of now and then giving.
> So pleasant it is to have money, heigh ho!
> So pleasant it is to have money."

Thus Seneca armed himself in coat of mail against his enemies. In one respect at least he was true to his own teaching, for he gave up his wealth in later years as lightly

as he gained it. Elaborate and bewildering in its cross folds and interwoven network of steel as his armour is, one shaft of Suillius' may have pierced it through. "Habebit philosophus amplas opes," he writes, "sed sine cujusquam injuria partas, sine sordidis quaestibus . . . quibus nemo ingemiscat nisi malignus." The natives in Britain, it is said, were goaded into furious rebellion by Seneca's usurious harshness.[1] The provinces, declared Suillius, were crushed beneath Seneca's love of money. "The philosopher's wealth," declares Seneca, "is not gained at any one's hurt." Though he disclaim the title of philosopher, yet Seneca must stand arraigned at the judgment bar of History for this.

As against Suillius, Seneca's immediate task was not difficult. The informer was bitterly hated and open to quick ruin. He could be charged with many crimes, but his notoriously evil life in Rome exposed him to a speedier condemnation than his provincial malpractices. His oratorical greed had, urged his assailants, claimed victims from the noblest born of Rome, victims deceived, incited to sedition, entrapped, condemned, slain by his arts. He sought in his defence to plead Claudius' commands. Nero gave him the lie direct. "He, the Emperor, had searched his father's journals, and there was no mention of any single accusation forced upon Suillius." When he fell back on Messalina's orders, the retort was easy. Why did she select Suillius as agent of her crimes?

The informer was condemned, deprived of part of his wealth, and exiled to the Balearic isles. There he lived cheerfully, luxuriously, indolently. Not Milo could have enjoyed his Massiliot mullets more. When his foes next accused his son Nerullinus, to whom part of his father's property had been given, Nero intervened. "Vengeance," declared the Emperor, "was fully satisfied." Once again praise is due to the Prince, who imposes a veto in an undoubted cause of justice. It is not Nero, but Seneca, who is left perhaps with a somewhat tarnished reputation. Scandalous though the charges against the philosopher might have been, punished though his accusers were, yet scandal in this world does not perish from men's memory either with disproof or philosophic nonchalance. Neither did the philosopher's justification of riches endear their creditor to the hearts of helpless or half-civilised debtors.[2]

[1] Dio Cassius, lxii. 2.

[2] See note at end.

CHAPTER IV

Court Life and Personal History, A.D. 55-63

§ 1. Poppaea Sabina.
§ 2. The Death of Agrippina.
§ 3. Games and Festivals.
§ 4. Rubellius Plautus.
§ 5. Burrus and Tigellinus.
§ 6. Seneca's Retirement.
§ 7. Sulla and Plautus.
§ 8. The Death of Octavia.
§ 9. Death of Poppaea. Statilia Messalina.

"Then some one spake: 'Behold! it was a crime
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time.'
Another said: 'The crime of sense became
The crime of malice, and is equal blame.'"

(Tennyson, *The Vision of Sin.*)

PROFILE OF THE HEAD OF A STATUE OF THE CLAUDIAN AGE

IN THE MUSEO CHIARAMONTI IN THE VATICAN, ROME

Attribution very uncertain, but possibly Poppæa Sabina

CHAPTER IV

§ 1. Poppaea Sabina

WHEN now we resume at Tacitus' urgent instance the tale of the Palace life and private crimes of Nero, the Emperor, it must be at least so far unwillingly that we must first honestly, if uneasily, confess the feeling that there is some disproportion in the importance of the events compared with the length of the narrative devoted to them, even though this disproportion pleads in its excuse not only the masterful control of Roman literary genius, but also the journalistic greed for the horrible which seems instinctive in the taste of all ages alike. All the while that we are presenting the picture of a weak and sensual youth, encouraged in his immoralities by unscrupulous women who contend for dominion over him, we have of a just necessity the latent consciousness that this was the Prince whose strength shielded the Empire from danger, whose chosen ministers administered its provinces with justice, whose generals waged successful war. For the fascination of the heroines of evil has corrupted history as well as princes, and seeks to destroy historic truth and insight as well as self-control and impulses to righteousness.

Yet scrutinise the story of Palace intrigue and of Nero's excesses though we may as closely as distastefully, we cannot deny its main features, we cannot palliate them. None of the attempts at denial (and denial is well nigh the only palliation possible) is successful. Neither can the modern historian hope to emulate the delight which inspires the ancient writer at the contemplation of such topics, or desire to excite in the audience of the present the unique curiosity of a vanished age.

Nero yielded himself a helpless prisoner to his lower appetites. Yet Seneca was at his side, the preacher who urged that true pleasure could be but the scorn of pleasures. "Virtue alone," he cried, "enjoys true liberty, a never-failing

joy, and perfect peace. We seek not after virtue for the pleasure we find therein. Yet pleasure waits on virtue, but the flowers which adorn the ripe field of corn are not the purpose of the sowing. Pleasure is but the shadow clinging to the substance, or as the maid waiting on her mistress. There is an ancient precept, 'Follow God;' Virtue's knight may never forget it. We are born in a kingdom upon earth, and to obey God is our liberty."[1]

"Thou art indeed," says Falstaff to another high spirited youth, "the most comparative, rascalliest, sweet young Prince; but Hal, I prithee, trouble me no more with vanity. I would to God thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought. An old Lord of the Council rated me the other day in the street about you, sir, but I marked him not; and yet he talked very wisely, but I regarded him not; and yet he talked wisely, and in the street too."

Seneca's moral precepts were for the street, not for the palace. At least Nero regarded him not. His employment was in Diana's forestry. "The true prince for recreation's sake proved a false thief, for the poor abuses of the time wanted countenance."

At the head of a band of roysterers the Emperor, in slave's disguise, roamed the streets after nightfall. They waylaid the passers-by, stabbed them, robbed them, stripped them, hurled them into the sewers. They haunted inns and houses of ill-fame, pillaged shops, forced their way into houses, insulted ladies of high rank and noble youths. Other young nobles followed the example of their brawling, so that Rome at night showed scenes as it were of some captured city. In riotous frolics of the kind blows might not only be dealt, but be received. In one revel in the year 56 a young noble, Julius Montanus by name, fell upon Nero as he stayed his wife to insult her, and cudgelled him well nigh to death. The Emperor bore him no grudge for this, holding it fair fortune of war, had not Montanus, recognising him after the fray, come to plead for pardon. Such confessed recognition was beyond forgiveness. A short sharp question was enough. "You struck Nero and still dare live?" Montanus knew his fate and slew himself. And henceforth a small troop of gladiators attended the Emperor on his revels, ready to succour him if hard pressed. Another happier victim of such turbulence was of still higher birth. The Mulvian Bridge

[1] See note at end.

outside the Flaminian gate was much haunted by the Roman Mohocks. Entering the city thence by the gate one night in A.D. 58, Nero chanced to turn aside out of the straight way which led into the heart of the city, and climbed the slope of the Pincian Hill to Sallust's gardens there. Part of his suite, however, who went back direct, were waylaid, and roughly handled by another band of kindred spirits. It was a plot, Graptus, one of the Imperial freedmen, declared in agitation to his master, to assassinate the Emperor, and set up his cousin Cornelius Sulla in his room; fortune alone had preserved him. Evidence of the plot there was none. But three years earlier, Pallas and Burrus together (a strange conjunction) had been accused of a plot in Sulla's favour of like intent, absurdly indeed, and with the informer's exile as the sole result. Sulla, too, notoriously lacked all ambition, and was placidly apathetic. Yet his was the great dictator's name, and the repetition of his supposed disloyalty, together with the narrow escape from that night's peril, alarmed Nero, and Sulla was exiled on suspicion to Massilia. There he lived quietly for the four years which yet remained to him of life.[1]

Seneca in his study wrote and published moral treatise after treatise. Nero, his former pupil, in his own way put into practice in the streets of Rome the one lesson which he had learned perfectly from his preceptor, the lesson of his own omnipotence. It was no philosopher who now challenged this, but a woman.[2]

In the Principate of Tiberius there had lived a certain C. Poppaeus Sabinus, a man of tried loyalty and ability, who during twenty-four years had governed wisely and well many important provinces, and had been accorded triumphal honours by the Emperor. Dying in the year A.D. 35, he left behind him a daughter, Poppaea Sabina, who is celebrated as the most beautiful woman of her day. Her first husband, Titus Ollius, had been implicated in Sejanus' conspiracy against Tiberius. After his death she married P. Cornelius Scipio, but herself, in A.D. 47, fell a victim to Messalina's jealousy of her beauty. Threatened with a loathsome death in the common jail, she escaped persecution by suicide. To Ollius she had, about the year 31, borne one child, a daughter, who took her mother's name.

In speaking of the younger Poppaea Sabina, our cynical historian, perhaps reluctantly, waxes eloquent. Hers were all

[1] *Cf.* below, sect. 7, and Genealogical Table. [2] See note at end.

merits and all charms, he declares, save uprightness only. Her birth was noble, her wealth equal to her birth. She inherited from her mother her unrivalled beauty, and the Imperial poet in his song, the Roman ladies in their fashions, paid their admiring tribute to her fair amber-coloured hair. Her charming wit, her lively intelligence, her playful and triumphant daring, won the girl every prize upon which she set her heart. She was superstitious, loved to consort with her astrologers, and was so attracted by the mysterious rites of the Hebrews that men have claimed her as a Jewish proselyte on but scanty evidence. Secretly *dévote*, yet pleasure-loving, without scruple of honour, yet of such chaste and shrinking modesty to all seeming that she but rarely showed herself in public, and then only with her face half-veiled, she has piqued all men's curiosity of her own and of all later days. Afterwards, when she had climbed the heights of her desire, she tended her loveliness with anxious care. Five hundred asses gave her milk that she might bathe in it daily. Her prayer was that she might die before the perfect flower of her beauty faded, and it was granted to her. Her love of luxury demanded mules shod with gold for her process to and from the city. The unguents she used were still called after her name and eagerly bought many years after her death. Beautiful, voluptuous, insidious, Poppaea Sabina bestowed her favours as she might hope to gain profit of them, and the Roman Helen died Empress of the Roman world.[1]

To her first husband, Rufrius Crispinus, Burrus' predecessor as praetorian prefect, she had borne one child, a boy, who proved no hindrance to her ambitions. The gayest and most dissolute of all the young Roman nobles of the time was Marcus Salvius Otho, future Emperor of Rome, who was just of her age. He was the bosom friend and boon companion of Nero, "tutor and feeder of his riots," entering with zest into a rivalry with him of luxurious entertainment, wherein he easily surpassed all the Emperor's efforts and gibed mockingly at the imperial "niggard meanness." Otho therefore attracted Poppaea. She eagerly broke the bond which linked her to Crispinus, who now had fallen into some disfavour at Court, and closed the intrigue by marriage with Otho.

Otho was indiscreet. Passionately fond of his wife and proud of her wonderful beauty, he lost no opportunity of

[1] See note at end.

praising her charms and her grace to his youthful comrade Nero. In her love, he declared to him, he had attained the summit of his felicity. He broke away from the Prince and from his banqueting-hall to hasten to her embraces. Piqued, challenged, and curious, Nero called her to his presence. Coquetry finished the work begun by foolish love. Now she enchanted the Emperor by praises of his beauty, now feigned hauteur and reluctance. Had she not heard, she asked with scorn, of his intrigue with the slave-girl? Now she refused to see him save in Otho's presence. Nero should be insatiate of her charms, not sated by too ready yielding. And she merrily enjoyed their rivalry. She sang Otho's praises to the angry Emperor, his nobility, his magnificence of living. She pleaded her wifely duties. It is all no romance, but sober, well-attested history. The comedy was played to a finish speedily. In A.D. 58, Otho received honourable mandate of dismissal as governor to distant Lusitania, a position filled by him despite his former indolence with justice and ability. Seneca's friendship secured him this means of escape from a sorrier fate. Poppaea stayed behind in Rome. Otho was first of all the governors in the West to join Galba ten years later when he raised the standard of revolt against Nero.[1]

Acte's victorious rival for the Emperor's favour had far more serious obstacles than the "slave-girl" to surmount in her fixed resolve to become Empress in name as well as in fact. Octavia the Empress was hated by her husband. She had borne him no child, not even a girl child, to delight him. Yet the people loved her, and Agrippina, who had chosen her to be her son's wife, was her patron and defender. This Agrippina, too, for the past three years, had enjoyed but little power. Yet she was Nero's mother, and the army remembered that she was daughter of Germanicus. Hers, too, was that same craving for rule which filled Poppaea. It would need all a woman's wit to consummate the crimes which must remove these final barriers to her last ambition.

The old Empress was first object of attack. Daily Nero's love for Poppaea grew stronger. Daily she incited him to hate and dread his mother. Mockery was a keen weapon of sharp thrust. "Poor boy," she laughed, "poor little schoolboy. With no princedom, no freedom even." Or there were tears, feigned tears of sorrow, real of jealousy. Sobbing sadly, "Why," she wailed, "did he postpone her marriage? Was it her beauty

[1] See note at end.

failed to please him? Was not she too noble? Could not *she* bear him children? Could not *she* at least be loyal to her prince? He was afraid, afraid, was Nero," she cried, angrily, "fearful lest were she his wife she would compel him to understand the truth, the ill-treatment of the Senators, the people's hatred of his mother's avarice and pride. Must Agrippina's will be ever victorious? Must her son's bride be always her son's enemy? Poppaea would go back to Otho then; she would flee to any corner of the earth. Must she even there hear tidings of the insults to the Emperor? At least she would not see them there, nor share his peril helplessly." And the troubled, passionate, fiercely-enamoured young Prince would fling out of her presence to hear no single word of any protest or dissuasion from any of his Court. They, too, desired to be rid of Agrippina. No one, it seems, faced the question, no one had the courage to ask Nero, or perchance either the wit or the desire to ask himself, whither such temptation as Poppaea's was leading. Seneca the wise, the patient Acte, these could save Nero from other temptations of Agrippina's offering. There was left no power, neither affection nor wise counsel, neither religious fear nor urgings of policy, neither timidity nor shame at the deed, to save him, his resolution now once taken, from the last sacrifice to outraged honour, from the crime of matricide.[1]

§ 2. The Death of Agrippina

If Agrippina should die, it might not be by poison or the dagger. Detection, urged Nero's advisers, would then be certain.[1] The freedman Anicetus, his early tutor, now prefect of the fleet at Misenum, suggested the building of a ship contrived to fall to pieces at pleasure. Could she be enticed on board, the Emperor could, with filial sorrow, deplore the loss dealt to him by the fury of the sea. The theatrical device was approved. But Agrippina had, at Nero's own urging, withdrawn to live at Antium. Nero must needs lure her upon the fatal ship. He journeyed to Baiae, on the Bay of Naples, and there laid his plans.

The narrow rocky promontory of Misenum forms the western extremity of the bay. Here the cliff, to-day, drops with broken edge to the sea. In the foreground is a sandy, low-lying shore, a line of black, desolate, land-locked

[1] See note at end.

lagoons, and, in the nearer distance, the small village of beggar-infested Pozzuoli, once Puteoli, the chief harbour of ancient Italy. Thence the gaze is carried away to rest upon the smoking summit of Vesuvius, the long blue line of the lonely convent-crowned hills above Sorrento, the quiet sea shining at the base of its precipitous cliffs, and the peak of Capri. Years, but still more giant hidden forces, have strangely changed the scene for the rare visitant to the promontory, since those days when the dictator Caesar built his villa upon its now deserted slope, and morose Tiberius fled the servile adulation of the capital to take refuge in his lonely palace on the island. The great city of Naples, guarded in the midst, may, to-day, excel all its Roman magnificence. But the erstwhile busy naval arsenal of Misenum has left scant traces in the recesses of the small bay which nestles beneath the Cape. The white villas that fringe the further coast line have surrendered the site of ancient Baiae to a loneliness of broken stones and ruined fragments. And in the distance the violet glow of the sunset, once reflected on busy streets and crowded temple, fades away unseen from the deserted ways of the dead city of Pompeii.

But on a bright calm day towards the end of March, in the year A.D. 59, there was great animation on the shore of the bay under Misenum. The sea, whose caprice once drew from the philosopher Seneca, as, after an unexpected tossing, he scrambled, sea-sick, ashore over the rocks, the unwontedly human exclamation that the man who persuaded him to cross from Naples to Puteoli by boat could persuade him to any crime, this fitful sea then lay guiltlessly quiet and sparkling in the sunlight. Baiae, the home of luxury, the "Inn of all the Vices," [1] was gay beyond wont and measure. It was the festival of Minerva; the Emperor had come to stay at his villa there; and it was, moreover, a happy day of reconciliation. The Empress Agrippina had sailed that morning into the bay from Antium, rejoicing at her son's invitation to visit him, even if half distrustful of it. But Nero had met her on landing with embraces, and escorted her to Bauli, a villa for her stay hard by Baiae, leaving her only after promise that she would feast with him that night at Baiae. And all the folk rejoiced.[1]

As evening fell Agrippina made to depart for Baiae. But it was told her that a most unlucky collision had taken place,

[1] See note at end.

and that her own Liburnian galley, in which she had sailed from Antium, was too sorely damaged to put to sea. By a happy chance there lay riding at anchor at the water's edge a splendid vessel which her son had sent to do his mother special honour. Would she not use this for the short voyage to Baiae? But no! Agrippina cautiously declined. The distance was not great. She would travel thither by land.

When she arrived at Baiae, Nero's caresses quieted her fears. Placed above the Emperor at table, she received all courtesy from him. Nero chatted with her throughout the feast, now gaily as a boy again, now seriously, as if to make her once more the sharer of his cares. The banquet was prolonged far into the night. At midnight the company rose, and the Emperor went out into the dark with his mother, attending her departure, clinging to her with embrace after embrace right down to the landing stage, as loth to let her go. The last farewell was said. At the water's edge Anicetus received her and handed her on board the imperial galley.

The night was gloriously starlight and the sea smooth, as the state ship moved quietly away from Baiae. Agrippina lay resting in the deck cabin with her maid, Acerronia Polla, at her feet. The only other member of her suite, Crepereius Gallus, was some short distance away in the cabin, nearer the vessel's stern. Acerronia was joyously recounting that evening's happy issue, her son the Emperor's repentance, her new won influence over him. With a crash the roof, weighted heavily with lead, fell in upon the three. Gallus was crushed to death at once. But projecting beams saved the two women in the general ruin. Confusion reigned. The ship refused to sink. Some of the crew were in the plot, but others in their ignorance hindered their efforts to overturn her. Thus she only listed over to one side, and Agrippina, with her maid, were slid gently into the sea. The maid cried out loudly, as if she were the Empress. Forthwith the blows of pikes and oars and any weapon that might come to hand, brought sudden death upon her. Agrippina, in silence, and wounded only slightly in the shoulder, swam for the shore. A fishing craft found her in the water, picked her up, and conveyed her to a villa of her own on the Lucrine Lake.

The very calmness of the night mocked the whole plan of shipwreck. The plot was but too clear. In feigned ignorance alone lay her one chance yet of safety. Hurriedly she sent her freedman, Lucius Agerinus, to Baiae to tell Nero of

her escape, by the kindness of the gods, from a terrible accident. She besought him, for all his alarm at her peril, not to come to her at once, since she had need of rest. This done, she set salves to her wound, and bade search for Acerronia's will and seal the inventory of her goods. Avarice yet clung to her when the need for it was long since past.

Nero, meanwhile, at Baiae, waited anxiously for news. The tale brought to him of the failure of the scheme, of his mother's wound and her escape, filled him with an agony of terror and despair. He expected, shivering, her immediate vengeful coming. "She would arm her slaves, excite the fury of the troops against him, appeal to Senate and to people. What succour then could be found for Nero?" He roused Seneca and Burrus in hot haste from their sleep, and called them in fierce impatience to him. They had known nothing of the childish plot—how could statesmen have approved its incredible folly?—and now listened to Nero's outburst of fear and rage in silent dismay. Mischief, indeed, was now afoot. Crime went limping heavily after its escaped victim, but never could be concealed again. The young prince was wild with panic. Must the deed be finished? Nero's very safety might hang upon its completion. They had come, at last, to this, that they were asked to abet a mother's murder by her son. Dared they withstand Nero? Would not this be to his and their own quick ruin?

Seneca was the first to rouse himself from his troubled silence. He glanced enquiringly at Burrus, and asked him briefly, "Would he dare command his guards to slay her?" Burrus shook his head. The guards, he answered, gloomily, were devoted to the house of the Caesars. They remembered Germanicus too fondly to do violence to his child. Anicetus, he fiercely added, was responsible for the whole. Let him finish what he had begun.

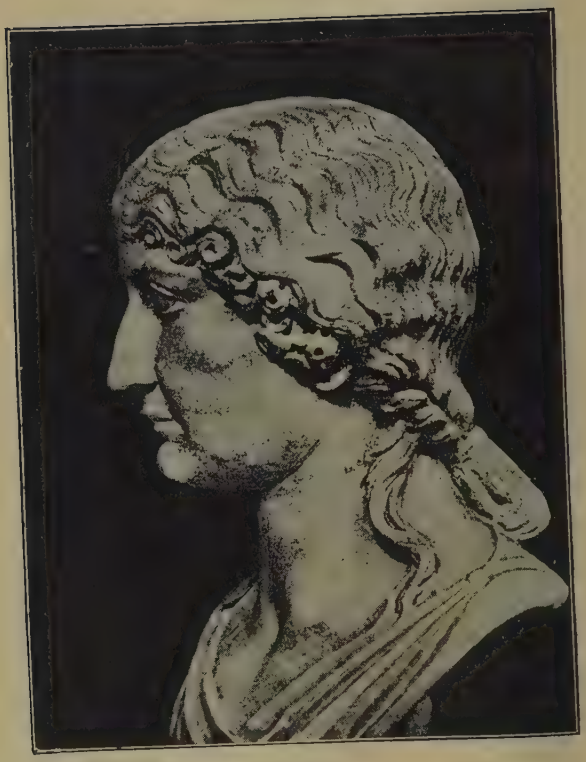
To Nero's surprise and intense relief the freedman showed himself cool, unabashed, and quite unperturbed. He asked for the task to be given to him. "At last," cried the Emperor, with bitter reflection on his greater ministers, "I am master of the Empire indeed, and it is a freedman who bestows the gift upon me!" Anicetus must hasten and take with him those readiest for his purpose. And, his courage returning to him, the Prince was first to seize an opportunity suggested to him by the arrival of Agerinus with Agrippina's message. Casting a sword at the messenger's feet

upon his entry, Nero called hastily to his guard to remove him in chains. "He had been sent to stab the Emperor, but the plot had failed. How then could Agrippina but slay herself, thus detected in a futile crime?"

Meanwhile rumour ran fast from mouth to mouth. Crowds gathered, and, hearing of the wreck, hastened to the shore. They swarmed along the beach, climbed on the groynes, clambered into boats, plunged into the sea as far as they could wade. Hands were raised to Heaven; cries, wailing, prayers, the clamour of a confused uncertain multitude, vainly questioning and ignorantly answering, broke upon the silence of the night. Newcomers hastened up with torches blazing. But then a happier report was spread, that the Empress had escaped after all. The crowd's mood quickly changed. They would go blithely to hail her deliverance. Then into the midst of all the uproar there broke the sound of the steady tramp of soldiery. The crowd hesitated, made way, scattered, and fled in all directions, as there pushed grimly through their midst the threatening troop of Anicetus' choice. They were no Praetorians who were entrusted with the charge to finish that night's work.

The freedman led his armed marines straight to the villa on the Lucrine Lake, and posted a cordon round the house. The gates were burst open; the slaves who met him were instantly seized lest they should give the alarm; and he hurried on to the bed-chamber, where at its entrance there clustered still a little company of faithful slaves, though most at the noise of his coming had fled in terror.

Within the chamber Agrippina rested with a solitary maid waiting upon her. One little lamp threw its rays feebly upon the gloom. As time passed on, her fears increased. No messenger from her son, not even Agerinus returned, this could promise but evil. In the sudden uproar her slave-girl slipped away, heedless of her mistress' cry, "Do you forsake me too?" Hardly were the words spoken when Agrippina saw Anicetus and two companions standing in the doorway. She faced them calmly. "Had he come to enquire after her, let him bear back the tidings that she was well refreshed. Did he intend a crime, it was not at her son's command. No orders for a mother's murder had been given by the Emperor." The slayers surrounded her couch and one smote her fiercely on the head with a club. With one last effort she turned to meet another's sword. "Strike," she cried,



AGRIPPINA

FROM A BUST IN THE MUSEO CHIARAMONTI, IN THE VATICAN, ROME

Identification probable

"Strike the body which bare Nero!" and fell back dead, pierced with many wounds.

Thus at the age of forty-three "died Agrippina, the daughter of Germanicus, offspring of Agrippa, descendant of Augustus, at her son's command, to whom she had given the power, for whose sake she had herself slain many."[1]

Her body was burned that night with but scant ceremony. Nor, so long as Nero ruled, did any worthy monument mark her tomb. A small tumulus was raised some few years after her death by some of her household, on the road between Baiae and the Cape Misenum near Caesar's villa, and it is reported that the peasant still points to a ruin to-day as Agrippina's sepulchre.[2]

Then first when the news came to Nero that the deed was finished he realised its horror. The rest of that night he spent in restless dread and shrinking fearfulness, as if the morning's light would complete his doom. First Burrus gently soothed his fears, despatching in to him the officers of the palace guard to press his hands and give him joy on his escape from Agrippina's treachery. His friends, and after them the inhabitants of the nearest Campanian towns, crowded with thankofferings and sacrifice into the temples of the Gods. Messengers with felicitations on his safety sought to cheer him, the sadness of whose countenance might betoken sorrow for his own deliverance at cost of a mother's life. But Baiae was hateful to him. The very sea, the shore itself, seemed to him filled with gloom. He was prey to a natural melancholy which needs no far-fetched explanation.[3] Rumours there were too of sad portents, of trumpets sounding on the hills around, of the noise of wailing heard at Agrippina's resting-place. He hastened to Naples, thence to write a letter to the Roman Senate.

What would the Senate think? His first paroxysm of terror past, this was Nero's chief anxiety. Seneca must needs help him to compose his letter. Shameful or not the document might be, but Seneca's duty was undoubtedly to make the best of a bad situation, which was none of his creating.[3] Agrippina's death was set down as suicide upon the failure of her freedman's attempt to murder the Emperor. So nearly successful had been her plot that Nero still as it were doubted of his safety. "I scarcely yet can believe that

[1] Dio Cassius.

[2] Stahr (p. 239), copied faithfully by Baring-Gould.

[3] See note at end.

I am safe," he wrote, "nor have I any joy thereat."[1] Yet he must needs add the story of the shipwreck, increasing the improbability of the fictitious excuse. Apart from this, he could but appeal to the record of Agrippina's life. Here he was on surer ground. Her fierce ambition, her recklessness of crime, her cruelties, the memory of these her misdeeds, might haply make men rejoice at the State's deliverance from her life. But could all this justify the circumstances of her death? "It is a simple confession of matricide," said some scornfully, and mocked at Seneca's skill accordingly.

Yet these were but the minority. The real cause and details of her death cannot have been known to many, and the bulk of the thanks paid to Heaven may well have been offered in honest rejoicing at Nero's supposed escape from assassination. It was no one's interest to spread about the true tale. Above all, Nero need have had no doubts of the Senate. A chorus of Senatorial thanksgivings, in which one man's silent contempt, that of Thrasea Paetus the Stoic, formed but an inaudible discord, decreed offerings of praise at every shrine, annual games on Minerva's festival to celebrate the detection of the plot, and other adulatory recognitions of the happy issue. The College of the Arval Brothers met on the 28th of March to thank the gods for Nero's safety, and renewed, at the Senate's behest, their solemn sacrifice of praise on April 5th.[1] A loyal address from Gaul besought the Emperor in happy phrase "to bear his good fortune bravely."[1] If prodigies of divine wrath must needs be noted, "In these the gods," says Tacitus mockingly, "had so small a share that Nero's reign and crimes continued yet for many years." And if Thrasea Paetus walked out of the Senate House as soon as Nero's letter had been read, "he might incur peril to himself thereby, but he certainly did no good at all to the cause of others' liberty." In actual fact, Thrasea had yet seven years to live, despite the "peril." It is the note of despairing contempt for the uselessness of folly, however high-sounding the titles under which it may be cloked, which here again is struck by the historian of the Empire. If men were not cowards, they were fools, fools of Republicans, fools of philosophers. What was it all but folly of the recalcitrant, knavery of the noble, servility of the courtier? And this, when but for their folly or their cowardice men might even yet live honestly and do good service to the State, traversing the

[1] See note at end.

narrow Via Media between obsequiousness and futile stubborn opposition! But the Senate lavishes honours on the matricide, and Thrasea Paetus hurries off home. Rome has the Prince whom she deserves.

Yet Nero lingered for some months at Naples, still distrustful of his reception in Rome. But his courtiers urged him unceasingly to pluck up courage. He had not accurately gauged, they said very truly, the temper of the city, its eagerness to welcome him. It was scarcely then necessary for the Emperor to demonstrate how much the richer in mercy the Empire was by his mother's death, by his recall from exile of her many victims.[1] Had he entered Rome with all their blood fresh upon his hands, the Romans would have thronged to greet him. But now, strong in the consciousness of his own leniency, and fortified by every possible assurance and Senatorial vote and sacrifice, at length he dared the journey, and made his public entry into Rome on the eleventh of September. The city poured out into the streets. Great stands erected along the route were filled with applauding citizens. The Senate put on festal array. As a hero of some Roman triumph the Emperor, "victor over his subjects' servility," proudly climbed the slope of the Capitol, and paid his thanks to Capitoline Jove.

Popular taunt and the gossip of the market-place might fasten his guilt upon him. A child was found exposed in the forum with the placard fastened upon it, "I will not bring thee up lest thou should'st slay thy mother." Jesters, safe in their anonymity, scribbled verses on the walls, comparing Nero to Orestes the matricide. Scandal was delighted, and the Emperor scarcely hurt. For he had graver consolations. "Many a time," says the biographer, "Nero confessed that the angry spectre of his mother, and the Furies with their resinous brands and knotted scourges dripping gore, pursued him in visions of the night. By aid of the magicians he had summoned her spirit from the shades and striven to appease it." So clear it is that if no retribution follows from man, Hell must be called on to yield up avenging sprites. The trouble is small, the artistic effect, even though it be commonplace, is certain, and the Roman reader was no Adeimantus to wish to disbelieve such belated justice. But indeed, perhaps we wrong the Roman writer and Nero's art. The Emperor's imagination was always lively, more easily excited than was

[1] See note at end.

his conscience. To be the prey of the Furies' cruel chase was a mark of no small distinction. Even an artist-prince may boast of it and fearfully rejoice in it, when by repetition of the savage tale he comes to accept this new gift to him of the Tragic Muse, the belief not only in his own certain guilt, but in the incredible penalty as well.

The final responsibility for the crime is Nero's, half unwilling tool though he might be of a beautiful and unscrupulous adventuress. Yet Poppaea's urging was but the last determinant. For long years the impatient desire of relief from Agrippina's presence, the thought of a freedom to be won only by her death, the lust of power unbridled yet ever stumbling at this one obstacle, all such hopes and fears, gaining ever fresh strength by fresh disappointment, had slowly ripened into the violent consummation of the deed. In earlier years, indeed, the Emperor might perhaps have pleaded state-necessity. But at the time of the murder, the instruments of the Empress' ambitions had long since been removed, and the fire of her vengeance was dying away in slow-consuming embers for very lack of fuel. Once indeed let the crime be attempted, and there is no turning back, however clumsy the method. Once let war be openly declared between son and mother, and the survivor should be the quicker striker. Nero's wisest counsellors admitted this, and we cannot deny its truth. But it was no sudden menace to his throne which forced his reluctant hand to draw the weapon from its sheath. None such can be discovered. The dull dead weight of an ungracious presence had by long lapse of years grown intolerable. Then, finally, Poppaea's beauty swept the last barrier of hesitation away in a surging tide of passion. The victim herself was bloodstained, greedy of slaying, remorseless. Her stern ambition had flinched from no treacherous atrocity of horror. She had sinned of late against the Emperor, if she had committed earlier crimes for the sake of his power. Vengeance repays. Retribution falls upon the murderess. But must it be by her very son's own hands?

§ 3. Games and Festivals

Returned to Rome in the autumn of A.D. 59, Nero, perhaps to stifle remorse, plunged into a sea of pleasures, shows, spectacles, racing, performances. From his earliest youth up he had been devoted to two excitements in particular, that of

horse-racing and that of the stage. On the other hand the more bloody sports of the arena did not appeal to his taste as they had to the more cruel Caligula. Nero's art and sympathies were always Hellenic rather than Roman. Games and gladiatorial shows and wild beast fights of curious and bizarre character had to be exhibited by every Roman Emperor, for the mob of Rome loved such beyond all other entertainments. But in the games of the arena Nero found scope always rather for his love of the marvellous than for an innate lust for the sight of blood. This vice Nero did not possess. Yet perhaps, as it is only historical truth which suffers, the failure to distinguish between theatre and arena must be credited to the modern prose preacher as an invaluable ignorance for the purposes of some lurid and romantic pictures of the crimes of the Emperor.

His love of horse and chariot-racing was in most men's eyes comparatively harmless. As a boy most of his talk had been of the contests in the circus, even though the subject was forbidden him. Once it was said his master caught him lamenting to his schoolmates the unlucky tumble of a famous charioteer, but he escaped on the plea that they were discussing Hector's fate. When he came to power he used little ivory chariots for counters at the gaming-board. Great race-horses past their racing-days he treated as veterans of the wars, and gave them money and maintenance. There were four famous racing factions in Rome, who wore the colours respectively of green, red, blue and white. The greens were always patronised by the Imperial enthusiasts—as by Caligula before Nero and Commodus and Heliogabalus after him. The defeat of the Greens, laughs the satirist, plunges all Rome into mourning as a second battle of Cannae. On one occasion the very floor of the area was strewn with green sand, and Nero also appeared as charioteer in robe of like colour. For Nero could never be content as patron only. He must needs be a performer in any pursuit he loved. Thus he early acquired the art of chariot-driving, and practised all the rules of training for the races with anxious care. For his own private practice a circus which Caligula had begun to build in the valley of the Vatican was finished in A.D. 59, and the great red granite obelisk, which has stood since 1586 in the centre of the great colonnaded piazza before St Peter's Church, then embellished the imperial circus on its site. And at Nero's invitation the people crowded hither to greet his driving with loud applause.

He increased the charioteers' prizes and prolonged the races, sharing keenly in his subjects' wild excitement. "The Green Charioteer flashes by: part of the people is in despair. The Blue gets a lead: a larger part of the city is in misery. They cheer frantically when they have gained nothing; they are cut to the heart when they have received no loss; and they plunge with as much eagerness into these empty contests as if the whole welfare of the imperilled Fatherland were at stake."[1] There was little change in the temper of the Romans in this respect from the days of Nero to those of Theodoric. Even his ministers encouraged Nero in this pursuit, for fear lest worse should befall. And Nero's passion for the races of the circus was as popular as he could prove it to be an ancient and honourable practice of princes. Agrippina had sought to keep his taste in check, but now he could indulge it to the full.[2]

Neither were the games in the arena discreditable to him in Roman eyes. Already in A.D. 57 he had delighted the people with novel sights. The floor of his luxurious amphitheatre was covered with sea water, in which marine animals and fishes disported themselves, and a sea-fight of Athenians and Persians was represented. Then, the water drained away, the gladiators appeared, and among them, at the Emperor's insistence, even senators and knights. This was counted to them as no small disgrace. "There in the arena men might behold the noblest names of Rome, and the spectators nudged one another gleefully. 'Look at the Paullus,' whispered the Macedonians in the audience. 'See there a Mummius,' cried the Greeks. 'A Scipio!' gasped the astonished Orientals and Carthaginians." And neither the Roman shopman nor the young noble at his sword-play may have felt the disgrace as deeply as does the historian of aristocratic sympathies. Lively representations of the fables of antiquity delighted the spectators. But the unhappy Icarus fell at his first essay of flight and bespattered the young Emperor with his blood. At other times there were bull-fights, beast-hunts, and combats wherein lions and bears, elephants, camels and hippopotami were exhibited, and military tournaments. Vast quantities of amber were fetched by special envoy from Germany on one occasion, when the whim seized Nero to have no weapon used of any other material. He himself in some curious fashion employed an emerald, perhaps as an eyeglass, to assist his enjoyment of the gladiatorial contests. So popular were they

[1] Cassiodorus, Letter III. 51. Trans. Hodgkin. [2] See note at end.

that at Praeneste, near Rome, there was a regular gladiatorial supply company. Yet on at least one occasion he refused to allow any, even criminals, to be slain, which might prove to the discontented mob that their Prince lacked any real sense for, and appreciation of, the arena. In fact that riotous mob could not be disappointed. Trimalchio's guest of the fire-brigade had few scruples of humanity. "Think what a lovely three-days' show there will be; real genuine fighters this time, none of your professional gentry who make a living by it! Steel o' the very best, no shirking I warrant you, no cutting o' throats o' the wounded behind the scenes. No, no! all in mid-arena, if you please. . . . But look at Norbanus now! What a show of gladiators *he* gave us, and yet he expects to be elected on the strength of it! *Such* gladiators. Decrepit old rubbish you could bowl over with a puff of wind! I've seen better set to fight the beasts. As for his horsemen —phew! Mere dolls, cocks o' the dunghill. One with the gait of a mule; another bandy-legged; your fellow in reserve well-nigh as dead as his hamstrung predecessor. There was only one in the whole lot worthy of the melting-pot, a Thracian he was, and even he fought like a machine! They were all cut down to a man—the people howled so to slay 'em. A pack of sorry cowards, all of 'em!"[1]

When such was the temper of the mob, Nero deserves some credit for his distaste for blood, even though he could not gratify it. He perhaps acquired it from Seneca, who exhibits a profound disgust at such spectacles. "I turned in to the games one mid-day," he writes to his friend, "hoping for a little wit and humour there" (a touch significant of Nero's reign). "I was bitterly disappointed; it was really mere butchery. The morning's show was merciful compared to it Then men were thrown to lions and to bears; but at mid-day to the audience. There was no escape for them. The slayer was kept till he could be slain. 'Kill him, flog him, burn him alive. Why is he such a coward? Why won't he rush on the steel? Why does he fall so meekly? Why won't he die willingly?' Unhappy that I am, how have I deserved that I must look on such a scene as this? Do not, my Lucilius, attend the games, I pray you. Either you will be corrupted by the multitude, or, if you show disgust, be hated by them. So stay away!"

"Homo, sacra res homini, jam per lusum et jocum occiditur."

[1] Petronius, Sat., sect. 45.

Nero was helpless in the matter, and perhaps more ill-pleased thereat than men often paint him.[1]

In his own day, however, it was his passion for the stage which earned Nero some ill fame. For the theatrical and musical performances, in which the Emperor took the greatest interest, the average Roman had no small contempt. And when in due course of time Nero showed an ardent desire himself to take the leading rôle, the indignation of the Roman aristocracy scarcely knew limits. But nothing could deter him.

In A.D. 59 new games, called the Ludi Juvenalium, were instituted in honour of the first cutting of the Emperor's beard, and celebrated in the private gardens across the Tiber, which Augustus had first laid out and adorned with an artificial lake. Here was a veritable Roman Vauxhall or Ranelagh of pleasure. Secret arbours were set in the groves which fringed the lake. Booths of every kind exposed for sale every delight of luxury and inducement to extravagance. The revelling was licentious and unashamed, and neither modesty nor honour could resort there. Nobles and high-born dames lightly acted every kind of part. To conclude the revels Nero himself appeared on the rustic stage of the garden theatre surrounded by his musicians, and, tuning his guitar carefully, sang to the noble company, to their great delight. A Nerva might be seen among the audience; a Valens acted on the stage; a Burrus, for all his grieving, led the applause. If the Stoic Thrasea refused to attend, his absence harmed no one, not even himself. Repetitions of the scene quickly followed. A strong claque of Roman knights, men in the prime of life, known as the Augustians, was instituted, and never ceased to hymn their Emperor's praises, and extol his singing and playing. The garland of victory awarded him by the judges for this was placed before Augustus' statue. The Emperor was hailed as Apollo, the one and only Pythian, and other adoring titles were showered on him.

Next year, in A.D. 60, he borrowed from Greek precedent and set up Quinquennial games, which he called the Neronia. The games included contests of three kinds, musical, gymnastic and equestrian, and lasted day and night. The Greek model was followed both in their conception of the games as a religious ceremony, which allowed the Vestal Virgins to attend, and in the combats introduced. The coarser class of pantomimic actors were, to the undisguised disappointment of the

[1] See note at end.

people, excluded from these games. Old-fashioned Conservatives grumbled sagely at the new-fangled Hellenic modes which were so dear to their Prince. Indeed, if the Hellenic spirit so controlled the whole that the games passed off without signal scandal, this was a tribute to the imperial rather than to the Roman taste. A curious result of the fact that Greek dress had been largely worn at the Neronia was that it became regarded as vulgar and went out of fashion.

For these festivities the Emperor constructed a new Gymnasium in the Campus Martius, the finest of all such buildings in Rome. It was struck by lightning in A.D. 62, and burnt to the ground, but was rebuilt four years later. And that nothing might be wanting to his people's enjoyment, he erected Baths adjoining to the Gymnasium. Even the "plebeian" baths in Rome of the age of Nero were adorned with marbles and all manner of precious stones. The rich freedmen's baths were wonders of luxury, with clear filtered water ever running, huge windows to admit the sunlight at every hour of the day, and built, says Seneca, to command wide views over land and sea. If, therefore, the Thermæ Neronianæ were spoken of in after ages in tones of excited admiration as the very acme of luxurious enjoyment, it is impossible for us to conceive the idea of their magnificence.

"Quid Nerone peius?
Quid Thermis melius Neronianis?"

Their site, hard by the Pantheon, to-day, is "a mine of marbles," nor can even the gaunt framework of Caracalla's ruined Baths suggest to us an idea of the red and white splendour of such Thermae as Nero's, when they were still unspoilt by time or plunderer.[1]

Thus for a few years Nero appeased the artist-hunger and the Hellenic spirit within him, with music, song, and semi-private performances. Later his passion for praise and love of the dramatic art will over-leap these narrower boundaries, and there will be seen "the final sight of Nero, the Artist on the Stage, coursing through the Empire as some strolling player."[2] Politics he could leave to his ministers. Art was his own, his chief divinity. The Romans looked on doubtfully. True, the lower people could be made well content, when, during the many games and plays, cates and little round tickets were showered broadcast among the

[1] See note at end. [2] Callegari, p. 7.

audiences, each ticket bearing the name of some Imperial gift to be received—gold, silver, jewels, corn, paintings, embroidery, slaves, cattle, ships, estates, and the like. Yet being a Roman mob, they might prefer their loved arena to his preferred and dearly loved Hellenic sports, since these last were bloodless. And the Roman aristocrat had from the first a horror of the disgrace of appearing on the stage of which the English Puritan would sternly approve, but Nero with his Greek sympathies could hardly realise it. In the horrified censure of the Roman historian is something almost grotesque, until it is remembered that he represents that Roman pride, which felt itself outraged by the Emperor's tastes and by his expectation that his nobles would share them equally with him. Nero's artistic skill was, it seems, not a very mean skill. His poetry, music, and acting were all at least respectable. It is not so extraordinary for a youth of high birth to be stage-struck and over-estimate his musical and dramatic talent. Nero may stand but as prototype of this folly of the enthusiastic amateur. Doubtless it was more unfitting in a prince. "Nero himself excelled, or affected to excel, in the elegant arts of music and poetry; nor should we despise his pursuits, had he not converted the pleasing relaxation of a leisure hour into the serious business and ambition of his life."[1] And he challenged the national character too directly. The same combination of desires, the passion in the artist-prince for the stage and for the stable, when it reappeared in the dissolute young Prince Federigo of Urbino, served him too in like ill stead. "His people, imbued with respect for the traditionary glories of their former dukes, stood in consternation at such spectacles."[2] Nero's artistic enthusiasms did little actual harm either to Rome or to the Empire, though in the West men fretted at their unworthiness. The record of their course claims too great a share of notice. In a measure it was of good fortune that after his mother's murder the Emperor betook himself to such peaceable and innocuous delights. We read that on the holy island of Delos in old time was a solitary altar on which men offered bloodless sacrifice. The very names of its Earth Deities were not remembered. Its rites were obsolete and dimly understood. Not less strange seemed Nero's Hellenic fervour to the men of true Roman stock of his day, and not less easily despised, albeit to modern thought it may seem to merit a

[1] Gibbon, i. cap. 4. [2] *Cf.* Dennistoun, *Dukes of Urbino*, iii. p. 194-197.

portion of the praise bestowed on the innocence of the ancient rite. Yet in the final issue, exaggerated though the Roman dislike may seem, coarser and more brutal though the Roman taste might be, there was a reasonableness in the Roman opposition to Nero's degenerate Hellenism, and in the Roman instinctive hatred of that Greek influence, which should first corrupt and then divide the Roman Empire.[1]

§ 4. Rubellius Plautus

Thus for some three years the ordinary duties of administration and his own amusements kept Nero busy. Up to the year A.D. 62, two great political murders (or worse) have disfigured the domestic history of the Principate. Neither, however, has injured the well-being of the Empire, and there are indeed plausible grounds for the argument that the Empire in reality has benefited by the deaths of Britannicus and Agrippina.

Setting these aside, Nero's home administration has displayed up to this point in a very marked degree the moderation and constitutional forbearance which he promised on his accession to power. His very personal tastes have showed dislike of bloodshed, and neither cruelty nor timidity are prominent features in his character. The young prince is passionate, proud, dissolute, impulsive, but is far removed from the black-hearted and incarnate monster of cruelty, who is the admired Nero of popular imagination. Such a creature is not historical.

Thus even the possible claimants of his power were treated by the Emperor during these years in a manner inconsistent with the reputed ferocity of his character. There were still descendants of Augustus besides himself. The two chief were Sulla and Rubellius Plautus.[2] Their very presence in Rome was enough to encourage conspiracy, and the fear of assassination was a real danger to all the Caesars from the founder of the greatness of the House downwards. Sulla, we have seen, was quietly exiled, in A.D. 58, to Massilia.[3] Two years later the risk threatening from Plautus seemed more dangerous yet; for popular superstition lurked behind it. Yet Nero behaved with cool wisdom and without panic or cruelty.

In the summer of the year A.D. 60, the Emperor paid a visit to that most beautiful of Italy's hill districts, the Sabine Mountains. These encompass the upper course of the Anio

[1] See note at end. [2] *Cf.* Genealogical Table. [3] See *supra*, p. 115.

river, and the little brown hill city of Subiaco, the Clovelly of mid-Italy, may be regarded as its centre and its capital. Above the site of the town in Nero's day, as its name implies, were three little lakes formed by the river, known as the Simbruine Pools, where corn-fields and olive-groves grow to-day. Near to these, and perhaps on the very site of the small rock-climbing city, Nero had a summer villa. The lakes were of such clear, bright, and cold water that they attracted the notice of the great Roman engineers. Hard by Nero's villa were the sources of one of the great Roman aqueducts, the Aqua Marcia ; and later Nerva bade remedy the muddy supply of another, the Anio Novus, by using the pools rather than the turbid stained water of the Anio river. Sky, water, and country, in the very remembrance only of their soft Italian beauty overcome the dweller in the city with a fierce rush of longing to escape to them.

The Emperor was so delighted that nothing would content him but a swim in the source of the Marcian aqueduct. An illness which ensued upon the plunge into icy water on a hot summer day was naturally proof of Heaven's wrath at the irreligious pollution of the sacred fount. The gods had been, it is true, as Tacitus suggests, a trifle negligent after Agrippina's murder. But so great a crime as the bathe aroused them from their slumbers. They despatched the inevitable comet as sign of their ominous activity. For six months the baleful apparition blazed fiercely in the heavens, traversing them, says the observer, in all directions, till at length it faded away in the West. Only a change of Emperors, said the vulgar, could be portended by so violent an omen, and with one consent they considered Plautus' chances. But not even this was enough for the excited gods. As Nero was feasting in his Subiacene villa, a flash of lightning struck the table and dispersed its furniture in wild confusion, though all the diners escaped injury. Who could any longer doubt the meaning of such signs? Plautus' own ancestral home lay but a few miles away at Tibur, Tivoli of the waterfall. The folk hastened there to greet the rising star.

Truly the gods treated their devotees with scant courtesy The comet removed the stigma of ill-omen with which all its brethren had hitherto been branded. The lightning missed its obvious mark. Even the Anio let its victim go. Nero took the craze very coolly. He wrote Plautus a letter suggesting that a visit by the latter to his ancestral estates in

the province of Asia would conduce to the city's peace and his own good name. Plautus promptly took the hint and withdrew there with Antistia Pollitta his wife and a small retinue. Here he lived quietly and peacefully. To the sore disappointment of the mob, the comet, to that of the expectant historian, the Emperor, was so far merciful.[1]

§ 5. Burrus and Tigellinus

But the year A.D. 62, marks a change in the character of Nero's Principate. It was the turning-point of the reign. The year opened ominously enough with the revival, after long disuse, of the Lex Majestatis, the Law of High Treason, in the trial and exile of Antistius Sosianus, the praetor, the banishment of Fabricius Veiento, and the burning of his books.[2] "The evils of the State daily increased, while its supports grew daily weaker," for in this year Nero lost the services of his two able ministers, Burrus and Seneca, and the loss of these did incalculable hurt both to himself and to the State.

Burrus died apparently of an abscess in the throat. The credulous, despising such trifles as symptoms of the disease, asserted cheerfully that Nero poisoned him. It was an opportunity for a moral story not to be neglected. The guilty prince visits the bedside of his trusty soldier with hypocritical enquiries. The victim probes his conscience and exposes his villainy with curt reply—"It is well with *me* at least"—turns his face away, and dies. Surely the tale would have been more dramatic, and could not have been more absurd, had at least some part in the stage murder been assigned to his successor and supplanter, whose iniquities made the dead prefect's blameless career and public services shine yet the more brightly in the remembrance of his contemporaries.[1]

For on Burrus' death, Nero, reverting to old custom appointed two prefects of the Praetorian Guard. The one was Faenius Rufus, deservedly promoted from the prefecture of the corn supply. Vice, however, being more attractive than virtue, his colleague easily eclipsed his fame, and the name of Sofonius Tigellinus still to-day in sentimental drama and novel rivals Nero's, in the appeal to popular detestation. His rise had been rapid. Born at Agrigentum in Sicily of humble parentage, he early earned exile by his viciousness, and lived

[1] See note at end. [2] *Cf. supra*, pp. 95, 96.

as a fisherman in Achaea. Allowed to come back to Italy, he carried on the pursuit of a race-horse breeder on the wide upland pasturage of Apulia and Calabria. His trade soon brought him into touch with Nero, who called him to Rome, and gave him the prefecture of the police in the city, until on Burrus' death he received his final promotion. It was perhaps natural that Nero should choose for promotion to the vacant chief prefecture the two men who then filled the two offices immediately next under it in rank, which belonged to the same equestrian career. Tigellinus was not picked out and placed over the heads of his superiors, even although by similarity of tastes he had ingratiated himself with the Emperor. Promotion went by seniority. As regards merit, the new prefect quickly showed himself cruel, and delighting in cruelty for it own sake, venal and extortionate, the curse of his Emperor, and finally a traitor to him in his last hour of need.[1]

§ 6. Seneca's Retirement

Burrus' death was speedily followed by Seneca's withdrawal from public life, so far as this was possible to him. His influence with the Emperor, his power, his wealth, had already exposed him to attacks, and these were now renewed on the opportunity afforded by the prefect's death. Vigorous efforts were made to poison Nero's mind against his old tutor. "His riches," urged his jealous rivals, "his beautiful gardens even surpassed the Emperor's. He curried favour with the populace, mocked at Nero's talents, criticised his driving, sneered at his singing, and, since Nero had indulged in poetry, had eagerly sought to show himself the Emperor's master in this field as well. How long should he arrogate to himself all the credit for the public prosperity? Nero was no longer a boy, but enjoyed a man's full vigour. He had guides and monitors in his forefathers' examples. Let him shake himself free of his pedagogue!"

The malice and the transparency of the attack could scarcely delude a Prince, now but too well acquainted with courtiers' jealousies. But Seneca himself now made his appeal. He offered the greater part of his riches to Nero, and prayed him in return to allow him to retire from the Court, and pass such years of life as might still be left to him in quiet contemplation. Nero indeed refused his petition and

[1] See note at end.

his offer. With hearty protestations of affection and of gratitude, and with eager request for continued assistance and advice, he claimed Seneca's further services. "He need have no fear of his envious foes. Himself would rather perish than do Seneca any hurt." But though thus retained in Rome, Seneca henceforth ceases to be of any public moment, and of his own choice he changed his mode of life, discouraged all courtiers' and clients' visits, and was but rarely seen in the streets. He was careless whether ill-health or study should be assigned as cause of his surrender of affairs.[1]

Now if Nero poisoned Burrus, he must needs have plotted against Seneca. Thus his attempt to retain Seneca at Court was hateful hypocrisy at the best. And Seneca's offer and petition were dictated by a very real prudence, a desire to save his life at any expense.

This is the view which Tacitus suggests, and a wearisome succession of writers adopts. We are invited to admire Seneca's "prompt offer," if so he might avert his danger; to shudder at Nero's "profound hypocrisy"; to applaud the philosopher's "courteous dexterity"; to curse the Emperor's dissimulation, and blackest of all crimes, ingratitude. We have called up a devil to please our fancy, and we of necessity cannot then rob him of his due. We start out in a search for the picturesque in a fog of prepossession, and end in a morass of complacent indignation. A Dartmoor wanderer could do no better.

Our mistake lies just in the preconception of Nero's character. Burrus died "opportunely." The inference suggested is obvious. *Cui bono* then? Here with some lack of logic we answer, not "Tigellinus" but "Nero." Seneca baffled Nero's sinister designs, and could rejoice in his escape.

> "Hell-spawn! I am glad, most glad, that thus I fail!
> Your cunning has o'ershot its aim. One year,
> One month, perhaps, and I had served your turn!
> You should have curbed your spite awhile. But now,
> Who will believe 'twas you that held me back?
> . . . . . .
> Try now, persuade some other to slave for you,
> To ruin body and soul to work your ends."

"Nero," says the Roman historian, "was apt of nature at masking his hatred under flattery." If Seneca saw through his device so easily, it must be admitted that Tacitus' choice

[1] See note at end.

of this very occasion to which to append his remark is not a very happy one.

In fact there is no just reason to suppose that on Burrus' death in A.D. 62, Seneca was not sincere in his desire to withdraw from public life, for motives other than those of timidity, or that Nero was not sincere in his endeavour to retain his services for reasons more worthy than malevolence, and by methods more honourable than hypocrisy. We cite Seneca himself as chief witness.

For many years past Seneca's writings had betrayed a twofold uneasiness which haunted him. The one, his possession, albeit a philosopher, of riches, we have sufficiently illustrated. But the other tormented him more nearly, and its canker ate steadily into his peace of mind. This was the doubt whether he, in abandoning the study of philosophy for the active and engrossing duties of a political life, had not thereby sacrificed the higher to the lower, at a cost alike to his own moral nature, and still more of his own actual worth to mankind. The conflict of the two lives, of the two aims, the question of the rightness of his choice, troubled him. He had been called to public service. But had he been right in accepting the call?

The maxim of his Stoic creed sounded clearly and straightforwardly enough at first hearing. "Accedit ad Rempublicam sapiens nisi si quid impedierit." "The sage," saith Zeno, "engages in the craft of politics if there be no hindrance in his way." Public utility, public service, said the creed, was the one and only sanction for the life of any man, to whatever ends that life might be devoted. If a man's business was to save his own soul, this was only because thereby he made the best use of himself for others' good. Service is the test of life, and the more persons a man can serve the better. "Usque ad ultimum vitae finem in actu erimus," cries the Stoic. The public service claims us to the last hour of life.

Yes, but the clinging doubt remains—What is our service to be?

> "It was my duty to have loved the highest:
> It surely was my profit, had I known:
> It would have been my pleasure, had I seen.
> We needs must love the highest when we see it."

But who shall assure us that what we choose, or (doubt more despairing) have chosen, as the highest, is the highest even for us?

"I cannot," wrote his friend Serenus mournfully to Seneca

in this same year, "wrap myself up in Stoic placita. Is the life of comfort, of ease, of wealth, after all the best way of life? I am eager to play my part in public affairs, not for fame and honour, but to do the State true service. Yet is it really worth while? Is it not all mere vanity, emptiness, waste of time, and delusion? Why not live peacefully at home without trouble, and die content without fame? We deceive ourselves, we flatter ourselves, we take our leap into the dark with fast-shut eyes, we strive for prizes never worth the striving. How shall a man win peace of mind at the last?"

There are few men who have never known their tranquillity of soul thus buffeted, who have never flinched at times before the assault of unsatisfied desire, or the monotony of life. Seneca, the preacher, comforts his friend as any modern moralist whose are the weapons of this life only. All service, he argues, is of value, the meanest as the highest, if it is the best that we can give. Active service to the State is best, no doubt, but if by fortune excluded from such activity, even in inaction encourage others by your example. The pattern of an upright life is never wasted.

But contemplation in itself is action, and the life of contemplation is the life of highest action; surely then it is man's highest service as it must be his chiefest happiness? Grant, by heroic exercise of faith (what other basis is there for the belief?), that service and not ease is the claim made upon man's life, however weary he may be, who will resolve us this problem of the nature of that service? When a man can devote himself to one of several "activities" to the last hour of his life, how shall he choose between them?

Thirteen years before Seneca had raised this unquiet ghost on a friend's behalf. Had not philosophy claims over a useful life of political activity, being itself more useful?

"Rightly do the wise marvel at the clouded vision of men's insight. How longingly Augustus looked forward to the time when he might lay down the burden of his rule, dwelling in thought upon a freedom which he could never win in fact. Poor Cicero, who prated of his 'semi-liberty'—as though the sage were not always free—! Needs must he be above all who is above Fortune. See Livius Drusus there in his insatiate and ruinous ambition, lamenting that he alone of men had from his boyhood up never had one holiday. Length of life is not to be judged by the number of years, but by the use made of life. Yet men waste the present as if it had no value,

looking always to a future which may never come. Only to those whose life is freed from the cares of the world is life pure gain. However short their span of life, they have never failed to live, never have lived too short a time.

"These are they and they only who study wisdom. Far from the noise and cares of daily life, they truly live who daily consort in friendship with Pythagoras or Zeno, Aristotle or Theophrastus. No one departs empty from such intercourse. What happiness and fair old age await him who resorts to such company!

"Surely then, Paulinus, after your long and honourable public service, it is time to devote your days to these, to administer the accounts not of the Empire but of the Universe. Your boyhood's more liberal studies were not to the intent that you should all your life be busy with grain storage. Other less able men can perform such duties. Whether is it better, to toil that there be corn enough for the hungry people, that it be safely brought, honestly delivered, well stored, well kept, or to enquire into the nature of things sacred and divine, of God and of the human soul, to search the wonders of earth and ponder heaven's mysteries? Here alone is true and lasting peace. Shame upon those whom death finds busied still with the ignoble objects, still striving ever at their toil, though old age and the law bid them make room for others!"

Thirteen years had passed since Seneca had written thus to his friend, and now old age knocked at his own door. The life of study had long been calling to him in vain. "It is no idle and no useless life. Surely, as I cry on men yet to be born to know the right way, which I have learned too late, I do more good service than when I witness a deed or support a candidate in the Senate. Believe me, they who seem to do nothing do greater deeds than the rest, and handle together things human and divine." "The judge, the advocate, the statesman, do these such service as he who trains and instructs the youth what justice is, what piety, what patience, or what fortitude; how to scorn death and understand the gods?"

His public life linked always with such doubts of its duty for him, Seneca at last seized on the opportunity of returning to the study of philosophy afforded him by Burrus' death, his foes' renewed assaults, Poppaea's hostility. That he gladly embraced it we cannot assert with certainty. They who preach resignation resign themselves reluctantly. Yet the

triumphant joy with which he celebrates his release from State cares, when he at last attains to this, is surely the cry of a man who feels that at length he has climbed the steep hill-side out of the steaming valley to the sunshine and cold clear air of the moorland. In his treatise "Upon Leisure" he reviews the refusal of the life of the politician in a veritable crescendo from excuse to stubborn justification. In the treatise is seen the weariness of the old statesman who despairs once and for all of his country and all governments alike, who can find no State wherein the wise man can be of public service in public life. Therefore he takes refuge, not in the City of Philosophers, but in the thought of the City of the Human Race, which is and lasts for ever, to which they do the noblest of all services who in this life pursue after knowledge and search after the hidden things of God. They haply by drawing ever nearer to attainment serve not themselves only, not one nation only, but all the citizens of the State Universal yet to come into the world.

Philosophy's calm retirement promised the statesman, "weary and old with service," a service not less honourable and freedom from that hate, envy, and contempt, which most harass a man's peace. Perfect safety philosophy could never promise any of her votaries. Yet there was greater safety in her haven than in the stormy sea of politics raging outside the harbour bar. "If ships sink in harbour, what of the fate of those at that time in mid-ocean?" It was hard to "know the currents and signs in the clouds when tossing in the unquiet straits." "He who bids me never sail on stormy seas, though he laud voyaging above all else, yet in effect rather forbids me to loose my ship from her moorings." Happy, thinks Seneca, had he never launched out into that stormy deep. Happier he who in the deep recesses of some lonely bay learnt to know the truths of man, of nature, of conscience, and of God. For the pursuit of knowledge was man's greatest service to his fellows. There is no trace of regret in any of Seneca's later works for the life he had abandoned or the riches he surrendered. If the Emperor would grant to him "a rest untroubled by the cares of State," he would be to him a god indeed.

> "O Meliboee, Deus nobis haec otia fecit;
> Namque erit ille mihi semper Deus."

No cruel suspicions or devices on the Emperor's part drove Seneca in fear into an enforced and reluctant banishment

from office. It seemed to him time, against that Emperor's very striving to retain him, to come home at last to pursuits he had abandoned, to satisfy old longings, to go back upon an earlier choice, half fearful lest it had been a wrong choice from the first.

That Seneca's earlier choice had been the wrong one we do not believe. It may be better, despite his negative, to feed a hungry people than to preach philosophy, despite the "liberal studies," to launch out upon the sea even though storms are bound to rage, than to study navigation on the shore. Seneca's had been the noblest of opportunities, a prince's education. However he had used them, at least, in his eight active years of political life and influence, he had surely done the State better service than had he rested among his vineyards pondering the things of heaven and earth, and sent forth treatise after treatise of moral platitude and metaphysical speculation, which should receive rather the neglect than the acceptance of that posterity and the Universal City whom he hoped thereby to serve. "Facere docet philosophia, non dicere." We must allow to the philosopher, to the preacher, to the preceptor, his consolation for his renunciation of the life of political activity. It is his consolation that he, too, in his capacity may thereby serve the State, and that not ill. It is a consolation which he craves as keenly as in moments of discouragement he discredits it. But the State reserves its chief honours for the statesman, the warrior, the administrator, and that rightly. For even his own generation may appraise his work in rough measure. And to the statesman who in the days of his age withdraws to the long since vanished life of contemplation, the people urge, not that he has wasted his earlier life, whereof he too in his moments of discouragement accuses himself, but that he has earned his rest by service, and in that rest may still do service, to his country.[1]

§ 7. Sulla and Plautus.

Seneca had withdrawn himself from public affairs, although Nero kept him in Rome. For no prince can compel an unwilling statesman to work. And Nero's appeal to him to stay may well have been due to a feeling that in losing him he abandoned himself to worse, if not more complaisant, advisers. For Tigellinus was not slow to bind Nero to himself in a partnership not only of pleasure but of crime. In the dis-

[1] See note at end.

covery of plots against his master, the new prefect could best give proof of his untiring vigilance and prove himself indispensable. Three indefensible murders now mark the year of change, A.D. 62.

The first victim was Sulla, at Massilia. Assassins slew him at dinner all unsuspecting. Rubellius Plautus could not escape the consequence of his lineage any more lightly. Tigellinus suggested that Asia was ready to take up arms on his behalf. And actually a freedman sent by Plautus' father-in-law did outstrip the band of executioners, and carry, with the tidings of his approaching doom, a strenuous appeal to anticipate it by rebellion. It was just possible that could he have induced Corbulo to join him, he might have compassed Nero's fall. But the chance was remote indeed. By resigned indolence he might secure mercy for his wife and children, and he refused to defy the Emperor. Encouraged by a Stoic philosopher of the customary type, one Musonius Rufus, Epictetus' teacher, Plautus calmly awaited his end. This came suddenly upon him one day as he was stripped for exercise. The heads of both victims were despatched to Rome. The Senate added farce to tragedy by expelling both from their number after their death, since Nero in his denunciation of their treachery had omitted to allude to their fate. The Senate was quite ready to fall in with his humour, however saturnine.[1]

The third murder was the culmination alike of Poppaea's triumph, of Nero's degradation, and of the domestic tragedy of the Caesars' line.

§ 8. The Death of Octavia

The Emperor, it seemed, could win congratulation for any deed. Any successful crime, Nero might now think, would lack approval from neither god nor man. This theory was to be tested by a last crisis, more formidable than that of Agrippina's death. For Agrippina had justly estranged much popular sympathy. But the young Empress Octavia, last survivor of the Claudian House, was dear to the people of Rome. Loveless though her marriage with the Emperor had been, she had never been other than faithful and loyal to him, despite his sneer that "a wife's jewels ought to content her," and despite his passion for the more beautiful Poppaea. In that unhappy gallery of evil and tyrannous Imperial princesses,

[1] See note at end.

who for three-quarters of a century afflicted Rome, there stand out two portraits in contrast to the rest—each of an Octavia. Each was sorrowful in a luckless marriage ; each claims homage by her virtue and her purity. The earlier won affection in Rome as peacemaker of civil strife, the later sympathy by the cruelty of which she was the helpless victim. Both redeem the very name of woman from those unfathomable depths of condemnation into which a Julia, a Messalina, an Agrippina, hurl it.

Had but Octavia borne a son to Nero, there might yet have been hope for herself and the Julian house. But childlessness may ever cause confusion in the marriages of princes.

> " Hence I took a thought
> This was a judgment on me ; that my kingdom,
> Well worthy the best heir o' the world, should not
> Be gladded in 't by me. Then follows that
> I weigh'd the danger which my realms stood in
> By this my issue's fail ; and that gave to me
> Many a groaning throe. Thus hulling in
> The wild sea of my conscience, I did steer
> Towards this remedy."

Useful excuses link together rulers seeking similar remedies from Anaxandridas of Sparta to Napoleon of France. But when a childless wife has never gained her husband's affection, which is centred on another who promises him an heir, then the attack of many desires is strongest, and an Octavia fares worse than a Josephine de Beauharnais or a Katherine of Aragon. No power, save only fear of consequences, existed to deter Nero, and the very mob, the ignorant, turbulent, foolish, and insensate mob, only hastened her death by its championing of her cause. They shall answer before God and men for their deeds who play upon the ignorance and the passions of the masses of the people, no matter what their motive.

Three years had passed since Agrippina's death, and still Poppaea had failed to win her chief desire. Not that Acte, who had destroyed the mother's influence, could be any hindrance in her way. Nero's first favourite now vanishes for many years from view. From her quiet villa in the hillside city of Velitrae, she could gaze down over the olive groves on the lonely tract of the Pontine marshes spread out beneath, stretching to the flashing sea on the horizon, and see therein the emblem of desertion, or offer vain prayers by the Arno side at Pisa, to stay her longing. Poppaea was easily victorious over her submission. But Octavia remained the Empress

so long as Burrus lived. He it had been who steadily opposed Nero's admitted desire of freedom from her. "Give her back her dowry if you divorce her," he told the Emperor straightforwardly. Now her dowry was the Empire. And when Nero again opened the question to him, he replied with more than military bluntness, "When I have said a thing once, don't ask me again." Burrus evidently considered that a divorce would be politically dangerous, and the young Emperor quietly yielded to his roughly expressed opinion. But now in A.D. 62 had come a change. Burrus was dead. Of the servility of his subjects Nero could at last, he thought, rest assured. And, ultimate and impelling determinant, Poppaea at last promised him a child. Must not the heir, to be true inheritor of power, be born in the purple? Nero after so long delay took counsel with Tigellinus and Poppaea how he should divorce Octavia.

Merciless alike to her rival's good name and her life, Poppaea sought to accuse her on a false charge of an intrigue with an Alexandrian flute-player. Despite Tigellinus' threats and the torture, the constancy of Octavia's slaves baffled the shameful plan, and Nero was compelled to divorce his wife on the ground of sterility only. First he gave her the somewhat ill-omened gifts of Plautus' wealth and Burrus' house. But this would keep her in Rome, which was dangerous. She was therefore made to leave the city, and was put under military surveillance in Campania. Twelve days after the divorce the Emperor married Poppaea. She had waited long, but now at last won the crown of her desires.

> Nunc in luctus servata meos
> Magni resto nominis umbra,

cries Octavia in the tragedy which bears her name. And for the greatness of that name, Fate came swiftly upon her. One solitary freedman, Doryphorus by name, who had rashly withstood the Emperor's plans, could be removed without trouble. But the populace of Rome, safer in its numbers and individual insignificance, daringly chafed and murmured against the divorce. A rumour was spread that Nero had recalled Octavia to be his wife again. It needed but this to make the mob burst all bounds of restraint, and give vent to wild and inconsiderate joy. Crowds climbed the Capitol to pay thanks to the gods. They hurled down Poppaea's statues from their places. They carried about Octavia's, and

set them up, garlanded with flowers, alike in market-place and temple, singing praises all the while to Nero for his act of redress.

The mob's enthusiasm was as short-lived as it was fatal to its object. Bands of soldiers dispersed the shouting crowds, which were pressing even into the palace itself, with whips and drawn swords, and set Poppaea's statues up again, while the alarmed and insulted Empress hurried to the Emperor's presence. Might not Nero waver at the people's violence and proved desires? Casting herself at his feet, "she was now no longer," she exclaimed, "a rival for his marriage, dearer though that was to her than very life itself. She was but a suppliant for her life. This rabble, that dared pretend itself the Roman people, was of Octavia's making, her slaves and her dependants, and they sought her life to destroy it. At a nod from their mistress they rioted against their Prince, arms in their hands. Let Octavia but come back to Rome to place herself at their head, and what would be his fate? What crime, Poppaea sobbed, had she herself committed? Whom had she ever harmed? Was it that she bore in her womb a true heir to Caesar? Did the Roman populace prefer to set an Egyptian piper's son upon the Emperor's seat? Summon back the task-mistress then, she taunted him. Better this than to have her forced upon him, if he would not avenge his peril. Still the revolution might be checked by such compliant obedience. If Nero would not consent to take Octavia back to wife, doubtless the mob would find Octavia another Prince as husband!"

Poppaea's tears, her despair, her reproaches, all spurred the Emperor on to his last desperate resolution. The former charge against Octavia had been inartistic, and had courted its failure. A freedman paramour might seem to fools and courtiers more probable than a slave, an admiral of the fleet than a piper of the Nile. "Princes do not look gladly upon the instruments of their crimes," and Anicetus had of late been shunned by Nero. But now the Emperor once more in his hour of need turned to the prefect of the fleet to help him, and found him as ready for employment as before. Death threatened him for refusal, but rewards for perjury. Before a solemn conclave of the Emperor's friends, Anicetus confessed himself Octavia's paramour. He exchanged the cares of his naval duties for a pleasant home in exile in Sardinia. There in due course he died peacefully enough. And an imperial

edict charged Octavia with treason and adultery, vice and abortion, and banished her to Pandateria.

This small island, north of the Bay of Naples, was already the haunt of gloomy memories. Thither Augustus had banished his daughter, Julia the infamous. Here Agrippina, wife of Germanicus, had died in exile. Here another Julia, Messalina's victim, had been murdered. But Octavia's lot was yet more hapless and more pitiful than theirs. "They had known happy days before the sorrow came, and the memory of past happiness might lighten present bitterness. But Octavia's wedding-morning had been to her as a burial-day, her bridal house as an abode of death. She had seen her father poisoned, and soon her brother also. The slave-girl had been preferred before the mistress; Poppaea wedded for the wife's destruction; and now at the last an accusation was cast at her more terrible than any death."[1]

Octavia was little more than a girl yet, scarcely twenty-two years of age. Soldiers guarded her in her place of exile, and the last message was not long delayed. On June 9th, A.D. 62, the order came. In vain she pleaded before her slayers. "She was no longer Nero's wife, only his sister. She could not do him any harm." They seized her roughly, killed her brutally, and, striking off her head, sent it to Rome to gratify her rival's gaze.

Nor had Nero, Tigellinus, and Poppaea, reckoned falsely upon the city's cowardice. The temples were filled with the offerings of thanksgiving for the murder of a friendless girl. Why indeed, as Tacitus asks the question, why dwell any longer on the inevitable proofs of Roman shame and degradation? "Let students of the history of these times take it at once for granted that for every sentence of exile passed, for every murder which the Prince commands, so often are thanks paid to the gods."[1] Complacent gods, to whom votaries pay such vows! How could such be dethroned from the hearts of men? Unless by strange chance such complacency be not the Deity's one necessary attribute.

Thus Poppaea had swept her last rival from her path. The sentimental mob had helped to sacrifice another of its darlings, and ran to praise Heaven for it. Nero's many victims perished, in the flower of youth, in the vigour of life, in the decrepitude of age. Soldier and poet, philosopher and noble, empress and slave-girl, all pass death's gates at the

[1] Tacitus.

Emperor's bidding. No death moves the indignant pity as does Octavia's. Could not a woman's malignant cruelty spare her name before, her very body after, death?

> "When I am dead, good wench,
> Let me be us'd with honour: strew me over
> With maiden flowers, that all the world may know
> I was a chaste wife to my grave: embalm me,
> Then lay me forth: although unqueen'd, yet like
> A queen, and daughter to a king, inter me."

For Octavia, Claudius' daughter, was reserved a shrinking death in dread and torment, the last fierce stroke of the centurion's sword, an unknown lonely grave, Rome's fleeting compassion, and then a long oblivion of her memory.[1]

§ 9. Death of Poppaea. Statilia Messalina

It seemed, indeed, a fiat of justice that Nero should leave no heir behind him. Poppaea's child, born at Antium, the Emperor's own birthplace, on Jan. 21st, A.D. 63, was but a girl. Yet Nero's joy was still great. The child was named Claudia, and both she and her mother received the solemn title of honour—Augusta. The Senate hastened to Antium to congratulate the Prince. Decrees were passed for the building of a temple to Fecunditas, for the institution of new games after the model of Augustus' Actian festival, and other celebrations. As the Julian family held its commemorative festivities at Bovillae, so now little Antium was destined as the scene for those of the Claudian and Domitian houses. And when on April the tenth Nero, Poppaea, and their daughter travelled back to Rome, the College of the Arval Brothers offered solemn sacrifice to "Juno Poppaea" and "Juno Claudia Augusta," as well as to their more customary deities. But these violent rejoicings were brief, and Nero's mourning was very great, when in May the child died. The infant was deified, and a chapel in charge of a special priest was appointed for her worship.

No other child was ever born to the Emperor. He longed, says the historian, for children, and was passionately devoted to his wife. His great love for Poppaea is indeed remarkable, and it never wavered, even if her fidelity was more unvaried than his own. Once associate with Nero, and Poppaea to the

[1] See note at end.

ANTIUM: DISTANT VIEW OF THE HARBOUR FROM THE SOUTH

day of her death was true to him. She promised him a second child, but died prematurely at the end of the summer of A.D. 65. The tale ran that she was killed by a kick of Nero's dealt her by him in a passing fit of anger, when she reproached him for a late return from the circus. Romance must avail herself of a scandal at which History, in view of Nero's love for her, of his longing for a son, of his immoderate grief at her death, may be allowed to look askance. Her funeral was magnificent. Her body was embalmed and laid in the Julian tomb, and the spices burned were more than a year's produce of the country of Arabia. Nero's grief for her long sought vain satisfaction. Any fancied likeness to the dead Empress at once secured his favour. She, too, was deified, and the women of Rome erected a temple to her memory as Venus Sabina, which the Emperor consecrated in the last year of his life.[1]

In A.D. 66 Nero took as his third and last wife, one of his favourites named Statilia Messalina, daughter of the consul of A.D. 44., T. Statilius Taurus. In her coquetry, beauty, profligacy, and wit, in her love for lavish display and rhetoric, she was typical of the Court ladies of the day. But their influence and their interest are dead with Poppaea, and they hardly concern us again. Messalina survived Nero, but bore to him no children. Neither his passion nor his crimes could win the last of the Julian Princes an heir.[1] The destinies of the Empire were safe in Nero's hands: the fortunes of his line perished with him. We turn once more to the record of his statesmanship, now in foreign politics, in the distant lands of Armenia and Britain. There again we may discover the true Roman, alike in prince and statesman, general and private soldier of the line.

[1] See note at end.

CHAPTER V

The Eastern Frontier and the War in Armenia, A.D. 54-66

§ 1. The Eastern Frontier: Problems and Policies.
§ 2. Preparations for War.
§ 3. The Campaign of A.D. 58.
§ 4. The Campaign of Triumph, A.D. 59.
§ 5. Return to the Augustan Policy, A.D. 60–61.
§ 6. Annexation and its Results. The Campaign of Rhandeia, A.D. 62.
§ 7. The Last Campaign, A.D. 63.
§ 8. Parthian Homage and Peace.

"Indocilemque fero servire Neroni
Armeniam." (Statius, *Silvae*, v. 2, 33–34).

ARMENIA

Scales

10 0 50 100 Eng. Miles

50 0 50 100 Kilometres

Corbulo's March

Frontiers

Roads

Methuen & Co

CHAPTER V

§ 1. The Eastern Frontier: Problems and Policies

IN foreign politics the earliest of Nero's problems was a very old, but none the less an intricate, one, that of Rome's relations on her far eastern frontier to her one great rival power, the Parthian Empire. For over a century the two empires, the Roman and the Parthian, had gazed defiance one at the other over the river Euphrates. Backwards and forwards over that river had swept the tide of invasion, now with disaster to the one, now with defeat to the other. Neither power had ever permanently acquired a foot of ground on its rival's bank, but the hostility was unceasing, even when it was most carefully concealed. The Parthian monarch styled himself King of Kings, and, regarding himself as inheritor of the Achaemenid Empire of the old Persians, claimed all Asia to his sway. The Roman Emperor, scornful of the half-barbaric foe, not only defended with resolution the far-stretching dominions in Asia won for him by Republican Generals, but ever and anon dreamed of advancing the eagles beyond the river and adding yet new regions to his dominions. But one particular cause of incessant hostility remained, apart from such universal claims to Empire, and this was the country of Armenia, the very curse of the far East to the world's peace.

That the Parthian should claim either to absorb Armenia into the Parthian Empire, or at least to have a deciding voice in its political concerns, seemed natural enough. The country lay beyond the upper Euphrates, whereas no such natural boundary separated it from the neighbouring satrapies of the Parthian Empire. Its inhabitants, always a nomad and a predatory folk, were nearly allied to the Parthians in kinship, custom, and sympathy, far more nearly than to the alien Roman or his provincial subjects, the Cappadocian, or Syrian, or Greek. And ever since the days of the great Parthian King, Mithridates I., Sulla's contemporary, the Parthian had never ceased to claim the throne of Armenia for the second

son of the prince reigning at Ctesiphon, the capital of the Parthian Empire on the Tigris.

Despite all these undoubted facts, Rome as steadfastly resisted the claim, demanding always herself to exercise suzerainty over the monarch of Armenia. Her reasons for this become best apparent on a study of the Roman eastern frontier in its military as well as in its political significance.

When Nero came to the throne in A.D. 54, the Roman eastern frontier was composed of one first-class province under a legate, one second-class province under a procurator, and three little client kingdoms. The river Euphrates marked the greater part of its length, from the modern Erzinjan on the north to Zeugma, the modern Birejik, on the south, and the great Syrian desert. It is no part of our present task to explain, however briefly, the long course of events and policies which resulted in this frontier in the year A.D. 54. It is sufficient to remark that the constitution of this frontier was, in the main, Augustus' work, with some slight, and, in their *military* aspect, unimportant modifications by his successors.

In the south was Syria, most important of all the provinces of the east, governed by an imperial legate. Its garrison was composed of four Roman legions, with which we shall make close acquaintance. These were the third (Gallica), the sixth (Ferrata), the tenth (Fretensis), and the twelfth (Fulminata). A corresponding number of auxiliary troops brought the numbers of the standing army of Syria up to some 50,000 men in all, of whom cavalry formed a very insignificant proportion, probably under five per cent. of the whole. This was the only standing army which Rome possessed on her whole eastern frontier. Yet the military task of the governor of Syria was a serious one. Not only had he to keep an ever-watchful eye on the turbulent land of Judaea in the south, and this again and again was proved to be no sinecure, but the whole of the task of defence against the ever-aggressive Parthians for the whole extent of the frontier for hundreds of miles north of his own province rested upon his shoulders. Syria itself was easily guarded from Parthian attacks, first by the desert, and then by the Euphrates, the fords over which gigantic river were very few. In fact, the southernmost ford of all, the famous military position of Zeugma, was in the extreme north-eastern corner of the province. But higher up, the river could be crossed at various points, all definite and of no small note. And there

existed no regular Roman troops on the Roman side to guard any of these.

For north of Syria lay the client kingdom of Commagene, whose king Antiochus IV. had only local levies at his disposal. In this country lay the second crossing of the river, that of Samosata, or Samsat, also into Mesopotamia. North of Commagene lay the more important Cappadocia, now a second-class province under an imperial procurator, whose only military force was a levy *en masse* of the population in case of extreme need. Cappadocia was, however, of the first importance in the politics and wars of the whole frontier, inasmuch as the great highway of all the east, used to-day as two thousand five hundred years ago, crossed the river near Melitène, the modern Malatia, at the Isoghli ford from Cappadocia into Armenia. This was the "Gate of Armenia;" for between Isoghli and Samsat the great gorge of the Euphrates forbids the passage of an army. Cappadocia was, however, too far removed from the great military base in Syria to allow of an efficient control by the Syrian legate either of the Isoghli crossing of the river or of a possibly foolish and insubordinate Cappadocian procurator. Yet these were vital considerations in the whole Armenian problem. Galatia would have been its natural base, but there were no legionaries in that province. The issue of the Isoghli crossing was guarded in the Roman interest by Sohaemus, appointed by Nero in 54 A.D., prince of the little district of Sophene, which extended from north of the Murad Su (the easterly branch of the Euphrates) to the modern town of Diarbekr.

North of Cappadocia stretched lesser Armenia, on the western or Roman side of the Upper Euphrates' great westerly branch, the Kara Su. This was under a client prince appointed also by Nero in 54 A.D., one of Jewish extraction, Aristobulus of Emesa. North again of this lay Pontus Polemoniacus, on the south of the Black Sea, under its king, Polemon II. Pontus was of importance in possessing in the port of Trapezus, the modern Trebizond, the one great military base of operations for an army of invasion into Armenia from the north.

Armenia proper was fringed on the north by the three little Caucasian states of Colchis, Iberia, where the Dariel Pass over Caucasus debouches, and Albania. Separated from Armenia only by the river Kur, which, like Rhine, Vaal, or

in fact most rivers, is always a convenient geographical boundary rather than a very serious military obstacle, the Iberian and Albanian Light Horse were apt to make predatory incursion over the river, and proved of no small value to the Romans as allies in their wars in the country, making good the Roman deficiency in that arm of the service. On the other hand, the restless hordes to the north of the Caucasus Range always tended to press down southwards, and might at any moment be a cause of grave anxiety to the suzerain power alike of Iberia and of Armenia.

Such was the Roman frontier in A.D. 54. From a military point of view it was adequate to the proper defence of the eastern empire on one hypothesis, and on one hypothesis only, namely, that Armenia itself over the river was a friendly country under a friendly monarch, who owned Roman and not Parthian suzerainty. If this were secured, then the system of client kingdoms and a second-class province on the Upper Euphrates was cheaper for Rome than, *e.g.*, the alternative of the creation of a new first-class province and a standing army of Cappadocia. For on this hypothesis the only active foe was the Parthian, and he impinged upon the frontier at Zeugma only, which was fortified, under direct control of the Syrian legate, and hardly to be forced by an enemy with either most rudimentary artillery or no artillery at all. Samsat, too, was within easy reach of the Syrian legions.

On the other hand, if Armenia were hostile or under a prince of Parthian sympathies, the whole Roman frontier system was inadequate and exposed to most serious risks. It had four grave defects—in the distance of the Syrian army, the weakness of the petty client kingdoms guarding the river, the absence of regular troops in Cappadocia, and the inefficient means of immediate control possessed by the Syrian legate over the Cappadocian procurator. These blemishes were not sufficiently compensated for by the control of the "bridge-head" at Isoghli by a friendly prince. For the Parthians could crush him in a moment.

If Armenia was to be hostile, or at any moment hostile, one of two alternatives to the present frontier system was in the long run inevitable. Either Cappadocia must be made a first-class province under a legate with a legionary army, or the whole forces and districts of the whole Eastern frontier must be concentrated in the hands of one Generalissimo and

Governor, who should have absolute power of moving troops in any direction and placing them in any positions. The whole absurd jumble of client-kingdoms and minor and major provinces must be abolished. There were objections to both schemes. The first, in brief, was very expensive. The second was politically dangerous to the distant Emperor at Rome. Hence, though there are hints enough of both experiments in the history of the Eastern forntier long before Trajan, who finally adopted the first scheme, the Romans preferred to concentrate their energies on Armenia itself, and struggled always to secure that that country should not be hostile—*i.e.*, in possession of an independent Parthian prince. Hence the Roman interest in Armenia was of necessity not smaller than the Parthian, for on the question of its government hinged the whole system of the Roman Eastern frontier defence.

Now with regard to the country of Armenia itself, there were four conceivable policies for the Roman government, and only four. They and their consequences may be briefly explained.

The first was the policy of surrender.

This meant the Parthian annexation of the country as a satrapy. It was, therefore, from the first impossible for any Roman Emperor. The links with the past, with Lucullus, Sulla, and Pompeius, and their victories in the country, were too many. Roman tradition and Roman sentiment would never for one moment have submitted to the intolerable affront, and the Princeps, had there existed one capable of the proposal of magnanimity and surrender, could hardly have retained his power. No Roman up to the days of Jovian the coward can abandon Rome's historic claim. And the military reasons against, and consequences of, such a policy have already been sufficiently explained.

The second was the opposite extreme, the policy of Annexation.

Despite the Court poets of the Augustan age, this forward policy was contemplated once only in the first century, and that by Nero in the year A.D. 62. It will be seen that the disaster of Rhandeia caused the Emperor to abandon a policy of which no one of his predecessors had approved, which it was reserved for Trajan to carry to a triumphant issue.

The reasons for this reluctance have not hitherto been adequately considered. Certain facts of course are obvious. Armenia is a rugged, mountainous and poverty-stricken

country on the whole, exposed to the extremes of heat in summer and bitter cold for at least seven months in the year. Lines of communication are few. It is hard to conquer and difficult to hold, and thus may never repay the conqueror. Its annexation would have been a very grave expense to the Roman Emperor; would have required a new standing army in the country to hold it; would have imposed directly upon him the care and the expense of acting as the outpost of civilisation against the hordes of the Caucasus; would have involved him in perpetual war with the Parthians at a vast distance from Rome in a country whose inhabitants were notoriously Parthian in sympathy and where continuous campaigning presents greater difficulties than probably in any other known country on the face of the globe. The shifting too of the centre of gravity of the whole Empire further East would hasten the separatist tendencies already dimly visible in the Empire, which in fact finally issued in a disruption into a Greek and a Roman half, some centuries later.

All these reasons might well deter a Roman Emperor from the policy of annexation. But there remains the chief reason, which was decisive until a Trajan was found daring enough to accept all its consequences. This, put briefly, is that *the annexation of Armenia of necessity, of unavoidable necessity, involved the annexation of Mesopotamia and possibly of Assyria as well. It was impossible to move one step beyond the Euphrates without moving at once to the Tigris. It was impossible to annex Armenia only.* Both Trajan and Hadrian realised fully this truth, the former in acquiring, the latter in surrendering, all three together. Their modern critics have been less clear-sighted, and their criticism has been in consequence of little merit.

The question is after all the simple one of a strategic frontier. Certain frontiers under certain conditions are strategically impossible. The Eastern frontier as sketched in A.D. 54 may be roughly represented as a vertical straight line, on either side of which foe faces foe (if Armenia is Parthian). This is strategically adequate, if the issues of the frontier are properly defended. We have seen that under the system of A.D. 54—*i.e.*, the old Augustan system, those on the Roman side would *not* have been properly defended, and we have pointed out the consequent defects of the system, which led the Romans of necessity to a policy of interference in Armenia.

But presupposing the annexation of Armenia by Rome,

and of Armenia only, the shape of the frontier is at once altered. It may be represented by two sides of a square, or an upright pole with a horizontal arm projecting from the top. The Romans in Syria and Armenia hold the country on the outside of the two lines: the Parthians in Mesopotamia occupy the inside angle. In technical language this is summed up by the phrases, the Romans hold the Re-entering, the Parthians the Salient, frontier. Just as, at the opening of the Boer war, the Boers in the Transvaal and Orange Free State held the Re-entering, the British in Natal the Salient, frontier.

Special conditions may give the strategic advantage to either one or the other. Very special conditions may put either one or the other at a hopeless disadvantage from the first. If this in our modern instance was the unlucky fortune of the salient, in the supposed case of Roman Armenia, it would have been no less the unlucky fortune of the re-entering frontier. The Roman on this hypothesis would have had one solitary advantage. He would presumably have held the issues of both western and northern sides. But this by itself is of little use unless combined with a readiness to act on the offensive. For thus, if the foe in the salient attacks one of the enclosing sides, his opponent can hold this one, and, sallying out through the issues (which he holds) on the other, throw himself across his enemy's line of communication with his military base. The enemy is then usually in very parlous case, as he must either sacrifice those communications, which no modern army as a rule dares to do (Roberts' march to Kandahar is a notorious exception), or fight a pitched battle to re-open them, and stake everything on a single throw. But under the very exceptional circumstances of the supposed case, not one of these advantages would have been enjoyed by the Romans. This was due partly to the Roman slowness of action, partly to the Parthian mobility. The Parthians would have sacrificed their line of communication with their base with the utmost cheerfulness, knowing they could live on the country, could always regain them when they liked by a different route, owing to their vastly-superior mobility, and thus could shun or bring on a battle with the laborious Roman intercepting force whenever and wherever they liked. For no Parthian army was ever embarrassed by commissariat or transport, and it was composed entirely of cavalry and horse archers, or, in the modern equivalent, mounted infantry.

The Parthian would thus have possessed all the advantages of the salient angle, and no single one of the corresponding disadvantages which usually attend it. Moving on interior lines, he could concentrate his forces wherever he pleased, whereas the Romans would be dispersed along a long line of frontier. And if, for example, he swept down on the Roman army in Armenia, he might sever *its* communications with *its* base in Cappadocia, and, long before the army in Syria could come to the rescue, force it to fight at a disadvantage to re-open them. For the slow Roman could not regain them nor feed themselves without a battle. Then a possible Roman defeat meant utter disaster. The Romans would, in more technical language, have had to form front to a flank, which is the most undesirable of all possible positions for an engaged army. And, as a matter of fact, when in 62 the Romans *had* temporarily annexed Armenia, their strategic inferiority became manifest. The disaster of Rhandeia is proof both of the disadvantage of the *Roman* re-entering frontier, and of the strategic impossibility then or at any time of an annexation of Armenia only.

Under these circumstances, such an annexation was impossible. An advance to the Tigris, on the other hand, provided a frontier strategically as adequate as the Euphrates. But the enormous risk and expense in both men and money involved in such an advance might well deter any Emperor from the scheme, especially when other wars in the very distant west absorbed no small part of the Roman army. It was for these reasons that, up to A.D. 54, the policy of annexation had been steadily rejected.

There remained then but two alternative policies, which may be described respectively as the policy of actual, and the policy of nominal, Roman suzerainty. The former implied the possession of the throne of Armenia by a nominee of the Roman Emperor, who relies on Rome for his support and policy, and steadily opposes himself, his country, and his forces, as a barrier to any Parthian advance. If this were possible, doubtless it secured the peace of the Roman frontier in by far the most satisfactory way and at the least cost to Rome, enabling as it did the Augustan frontier system to exist undisturbed. On the other hand, such a Roman prince in Armenia occupied always a precarious position. The Parthians were near; the Roman army was far away; and his people and nobles were ill disposed to him. An occasional

Roman garrison in his country would not be of great service, and such isolated posts might prove very serious embarrassments to the Roman government at any moment. Therefore, as a last resort, there remained the latter policy of nominal suzerainty. Under this scheme, it was a Parthian prince who should occupy the throne of Armenia, but he should accept the crown from the Roman Emperor, and regard him, at least nominally, as his overlord. This might conduce to the greater stability of affairs in Armenia, and to the peace, in consequence, of the whole east. Rome might acquiesce in this, as possibly the sole alternative to either a forward movement for which she was not prepared, or an entire re-organisation of her whole existing frontier system, which she did not desire. At the same time this fourth policy had its dangers and could be accepted only with reluctance by the Roman Emperor. It was not of a nature to satisfy Roman pride, which must therefore be appeased or hoodwinked by some means or another. And if Armenia might at any moment be hostile, some frontier re-adjustments might after all be necessary. Above all, Parthia must be made to learn once and for all the strength of Rome. The favourite policy therefore of Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius had been that of actual and effective suzerainty. All three Emperors had striven with some success to place princes of their own choice, educated if possible in Rome, upon the throne of Armenia, and to keep them there by busily fomenting discord in Parthia itself, and harassing the Parthian monarch with rival claimants to his own throne, a subtle policy, which was all the more easy as the rule of succession to the throne of Ctesiphon was neither precise nor precisely observed. But if ever a powerful Parthian monarch ascended the throne, the position of the Roman nominee in Armenia become very uncomfortable, and the weakness of the Augustan policy became at once apparent.

And this was precisely the condition of affairs when Nero came to his power in October, A.D. 54. The Parthian throne was newly occupied by King Vologeses, "Arsaces" XXII., the most vigorous and powerful of the Parthian monarchs of the first century. In virtue of a compact made with his brothers, he claimed the throne of Armenia for one of them, Tiridates by name. By a peculiarly unfortunate chance (it really was nothing more), the king of that country, by name Mithradates, an Iberian by birth, who was a firm friend of

Rome, and had ruled it, save for one brief interval, ever since A.D. 35, had just been treacherously murdered by his own nephew, Prince Radamistus of Iberia. The small Roman garrison in the country at Gorneae, near the capital Artaxata, had contributed to his slaughter rather than delayed it. These events, the murder of Mithradates and the accession in Parthia of Vologeses, both befel in A.D. 51. The cautious governor of Syria at the time, C. Ummidius Durmius Quadratus, acting under orders from Claudius, and further hampered by an insubordinate procurator in Cappadocia, pursued for three years a policy of masterly inactivity, looking on while Vologeses fought Radamistus on Tiridates' behalf for the vacant Armenian crown with varying fortune. But by the summer of A.D. 54, the whole Roman policy had come crashing down like a tower of cards. Their natural friend, if not their nominee, Radamistus was dead, and Tiridates the Parthian had at last established himself securely on the throne of Armenia. This was bad enough in itself. But Tiridates was defiant and haughty, and, so far from recognising the Roman government in the least, threatened war and invasion. Now at once appeared the weakness of the Roman frontier. What was there to bar his way into the heart of Roman Asia, apart from the fact that his possession of Armenia was in itself, under the circumstances, a direct insult to Rome? Nero on his accession in October, as a mere youth of sixteen years, is face to face with the whole Eastern problem, which moreover is presented to him for immediate solution under the most adverse conditions possible, conditions more adverse, thanks to the policy of the last three years, than any which his predecessors had experienced. An active and triumphant Parthian Prince in possession of Armenia; the most vigorous of Parthian monarchs on the throne of Parthia, and supporting his brother in Armenia with all his forces; no forces in Cappadocia, but the path of invasion seemingly open; the army in Syria corrupted by long ease and perfectly incapable of taking the field; this was Nero's first problem in foreign policy. Small wonder that men in Rome shook their heads, and that their hearts sank within them. And under these conditions we enter on the most active and interesting ten years of the whole Eastern warfare and policy of the first century.[1]

[1] See note at end.

§ 2. Preparations for War

The duty of Nero's government was clear. Vigorous preparations had to be made for war. Troops must be prepared and despatched to the front. An active policy of offence, they decided, not defence, must when possible be pursued. And above all, a general must be chosen of tried ability and skill, to whose hands the very heavy task must be entrusted. The ultimate policy they had conceived was almost certainly a new one. Seeing the entire breakdown of the favourite policy of Rome's effective suzerainty over Armenia, Seneca, Burrus, and Nero first shaped the policy which went as far in the way of concession as any Roman could go, and were prepared eventually to recognise Tiridates the Parthian as king of Armenia on the understanding that he accepted the crown as a "gift," a "donum," from the hands of the Roman Emperor. That this policy of nominal suzerainty then first conceived was the ultimate intention of the Roman government from the first, seems proved by the fact that these were actually the terms offered to Tiridates after a year's warfare, in which the Roman on the whole had gained the decided advantage. And the phrase current in the streets of Rome, that their general was sent out "to recover" Armenia, was vague enough to cover this or any other Armenian policy short of surrender. If men at the time, or later critics, considered it to imply a policy of direct annexation, they were so quickly disappointed in the result that we cannot credit a far-sighted government with publishing this as its intention even by way of a blind.

But the Roman from the first made no mistake. Though such generous concession might be his ultimate end, Nero never attempted to offer it at first. Tiridates would have mocked at it. The Parthians for a generation had had no acquaintance with the Roman arms and the Roman strength. The cowardly surrender of the garrison at Gorneae had filled them with an unwarranted scorn of the Roman soldier. Ignorant, proud, regarding the land as their inheritance, they claimed nothing less than the entire expulsion of the Roman, and expected either no resistance at all or an easy victory. Such "generosity" as a proffer of concession from the Roman side could only have increased the foe's contempt, and have led probably to an invasion into the Roman undefended province of Cappadocia, to an "*αἰσχύνην αἰσχίω μετ' ἀνοίας ἢ τύχης.*" The Roman at least was never guilty of such criminal folly as

to offer terms to a foe of this kind before that foe had been made to feel and acknowledge the superiority of the Roman arms. This was inherent in all Roman statecraft and Roman valour.

Therefore in December of the year 54, when the news of Tiridates' final possession of Armenia reached Rome, the Government bestirred itself vigorously. The days of Claudius' inaction were past. Only force could compel the Parthian to admit Rome's suzerainty. If, after display of force, he still refused the admission, then Rome's hands were still untied, and she was free to experiment on any other policy. For by refusal of the concessions offered they became as if they had never been made. Resolved therefore on a military display as vigorous as it was wise, Nero and his advisers had to determine on a line of advance. This was easy to discover. The foe being in possession of the debateable land, Armenia, then Armenia must be the objective of the campaign. Syria was therefore an impossible base of operations. A force to proceed against Armenia must operate either from Pontus or from Cappadocia, and preferably the latter, as it gave by far the most direct access into the theatre of war by the Melitene (Isoghli) crossing of the river. Even though an attack on Tiridates might involve war with the Parthians as well, it would be enough to hold the issues on the Syrian and Commagene frontiers defensively, and push the offensive movement forward into Armenia from the Cappadocian base.

With this plan of campaign in view, the government, at the end of A.D. 54, issued their orders. The legions in the East were at once to be raised by recruiting to full war strength. The local kings were to prepare their levies for service. The governor of Syria, Quadratus, was instructed to keep two only of his four legions, and with these and the native forces to move to the river, and make a demonstration as if he were about to cross it. By this feint, it was hoped, the attention of the Parthians would be distracted from Armenia, already destined as the proper theatre of the war. That this was the plan is shown by the remaining orders issued. Quadratus was to hand over his Third and Sixth Legions to the general who was to be sent to Cappadocia. The new princes, Sohaemus and Aristobulus, now appointed to Sophene and Lesser Armenia, were to co-operate with that general and obey his commands, and the local Cappadocian army was of course placed under his orders.

Finally, as this general of the army of Cappadocia to conduct the invasion of Armenia, Nero appointed one of the two famous Roman generals of the first century. This was Cnaeus Domitius Corbulo.[1]

Corbulo was then about fifty years of age. He had been consul in A.D. 39, but had first acquired military fame eight years later in a campaign on the lower Rhine, and that not only as a successful general against the natives, but as a disciplinarian among his own troops of the old Roman stamp. Men said that he had one soldier executed who came to his task of trench-digging without side arms, as his order was that all troops should carry arms day and night on every duty, an order very necessary in treacherous Germany. His inexorable grimness terrified the Frisii, and made of his own troops so efficient a force that he was preparing to cross the river against the people of the Chauci when Claudius forbade him. Deprived by the Emperor of the chance of war, he received the lesser honour of a triumph for his pacification of the tribes. But the Emperor, and that at a time when his forces were fighting on the upper Rhine, in Britain, and north of the Black Sea, gave to Corbulo no other military command.

He stayed in Rome, amusing the Senate by his bluntness of speech, until about A.D. 51 he was sent to govern the rich and peaceful province of Asia. Now, to men's great contentment, Nero's choice fell upon him for the war over the Euphrates. The home government had made all preparations possible. It was Corbulo's task to justify Nero's choice.

The general hurried out to the east in the beginning of the next year, A.D. 55. At Aegae, in Cilicia, he received from Quadratus the half of the Syrian army, as Nero had directed, and proceeded to Cappadocia. Both he and Quadratus then sent envoys to the Parthian king, Vologeses, demanding his neutrality in the coming war with Tiridates, and hostages as a pledge of it. The good fortune of the Roman army never stood it in better stead than at this juncture. Corbulo found his two Syrian legions utterly unfit to take the field. Their state must have filled the disciplinarian's soul with dismay. All offensive operations must be postponed for many months. The game of bluff which he played with Vologeses might well have been disastrous without fortune's aid. Tiridates was in no position to attack on his part without his brother's help. And precisely at this juncture Vologeses found his forces

[1] See note at end.

imperatively demanded elsewhere. The envoy from Syria arrived before his colleague from Cappadocia, which proves the Parthian monarch to have been in South Armenia, if not already in Mesopotamia. He was, in fact, withdrawing his forces, which had escorted Tiridates on his last seizure of the Armenian crown, and completely evacuated the country, giving to the Romans the hostages which they demanded. These were sons of the Parthian nobility, a circle of constant danger to the reigning dynasty. Vologeses already suspected the peril which menaced him from his own son, Vardanes, who, indeed, rebelled against him by November of this year, A.D. 55. It was this which caused his timely submission to the Roman demands, which conveniently enabled him to take hostages from his nobles for their loyalty. A war with Rome was, at the time, of necessity far from his thoughts. For two and a half years Vardanes' revolt detained him, and it was not quelled till June A.D. 58.

Stalemate was during this time the lot of both sides, to Corbulo's entire satisfaction. Vardanes had given him the time of which he had crying need for the organisation of his army. That Tiridates remained for so long king undisturbed of Armenia, was a very minor concern to the general, who knew that the initiative of action rested in his own hands. The fact that the Roman delayed so long before delivering his attack, and that, too, at a time when Vologeses' hands were tied, and the quicker that attack was made the more reasonable the prospects of its success, is the most eloquent testimony to the condition of the two legions when Corbulo received them from Quadratus. Only necessity could justify the two and a half years' delay.

There were veterans in those legions, says the Roman historian, who had never served on outpost or sentry duty in their lives. The very sight of field entrenchments was novel to them. Their equipment was as defective as their discipline. Their service had been passed in the pleasant languorous towns of Syria. These troops, now called upon to face the hardest of campaigns and most inclement of climes, had spent their days in cities under a hot Syrian sun, trafficking as petty hucksters to gain themselves the means of renewed enjoyment. Corbulo had two full years' work on his hands. He purged his sorry army of the incapable; raised recruits throughout Galatia and Cappadocia; and drilled the whole relentlessly. Part of the Tenth Legion, too, was called up

from Syria, and to replace it the Fourth Legion (Scythica) was sent from Germany. Finally, late in the year 57, he led his new modelled army over the Euphrates at Isoghli to complete the hardening process by the terrible experience of a winter under canvas in Armenia. For his camp he chose a site within easy reach of his Cappadocian base and of commissariat trains from the Black Sea, and itself the most suitable base for his objective next year, Tiridates' capital city, Artaxata. This site was the plateau of Erzerûm, six thousand feet above sea level, and hard by the sources of the Kara Su.[1]

The discomfort and privations endured here by the troops were very great, neither did the merciless severity with which their general treated any attempt at desertion admit any excuse in the sufferings experienced. Though sentinels were found frozen at their posts, though men lost limbs by frost bite, though the ground was as iron, and must be hewn up to win places for the tents, yet Corbulo suffered not the least relaxation of duty. He himself encouraged his men, sharing cheerily with them in every labour and every privation. In light attire, with bare head, he might be found always at work in the camp, here with a word of praise for the zealous, there with one of encouragement for the sick, himself the exemplar of every soldierly virtue. "The pick," he said, "must conquer the foe,"[2] and it was not its use for entrenching in face of the enemy of which he was chiefly thinking. To disobedience of orders in his subordinate officers, whatever its motive, he was ruthless. The auxiliaries were disposed in smaller fortified posts surrounding the main legionary camp at a distance, and the garrison commandants were forbidden to engage in hostilities, however menacing the attitude of the natives. One of these, Paccius Orfitus by name, seeing, as he thought, a good opportunity for striking terror into the hostile district in which he and his garrison were placed, disregarded the chief's army order and sallied out. His force was discomfited, and Corbulo's wrath extreme. He and his defeated troops were ordered to encamp outside the fortified lines, which was an old Roman military degradation, and they won forgiveness only after good service done and at the entreaty of the entire army.

So the terrible winter passed away. With the coming of the spring of A.D. 58, Corbulo reviewed an army, small, it is true, but at last disciplined, hardy, seasoned, and with implicit confidence in its chief, worth ten times its number of fat

[1] See note at end. [2] Frontinus Strateg., iv. 7. 2.

Syrian burghers and raw Cappadocian levies, worthy at last, thanks to its general, of the name of a Roman army. The instrument was ready to his hand. Tiridates had already taken the field, ravaging and burning the lands of any Armenians who favoured the Roman cause. Corbulo struck his tents and marched to find the enemy.[1]

§ 3. The Campaign of A.D. 58

Misled by his military experiences in Germany, Corbulo believed not only that a native foe would attack an army led against them *en masse*, but also that in a hostile, unknown, and intricate country it was the height of imprudence to separate his forces into several columns. But a month or two's vain pursuit after the foe proved to him that Tiridates had no intention of risking all his fortunes on a battle. The slippery and elusive king availed himself of his mobility, a mobility of horsemen vastly superior to that of the slow-moving Roman infantry, to baffle all endeavours to force him to a stand. The Armenian De Wet carried on an active guerilla warfare, which compelled the Roman general to change his tactics. Corbulo determined to divide his force, send out separate columns of pursuit, and, above all, enlist a native light-armed cavalry in his service.

He issued orders to his legates and cavalry leaders each to follow with his detachment a separate line of advance. Antiochus of Commagene was to operate from the south-west; Pharasmanes, King of Iberia, and father of Tiridates' dead rival, Radamistus, from the north and north-east. The warlike tribe of the Moschi, who dwelt in the district between the Upper Kur and the Choruk Su, and in the mountains south of Colchis, were engaged to sweep down from the north-west. Save from the east and south-east Tiridates found himself pressed and harried from every side, and that not only by the Roman legionary, whom it was easy to elude if hazardous to face, but also by a cavalry equal to his own in mobility and daring. He did indeed escape a pursuit, not one single incident of which is preserved by the incurious negligence of our historians. But when Corbulo withdrew his troops at the close of the campaign back to their old winter quarters at Erzerûm (for only here could he feed them),

[1] See note at end.

Tiridates opened negotiations for the first time. The first object of the war had at least been attained. The enemy had been compelled to treat.

Tiridates, however, was found to be in no very complacent humour. With the usual empty boasting of an Oriental, he deplored the unprovoked attack upon a friendly monarch, who had so long been settled on his throne and might look rather for the courteous gifts of peace than for the contumely of war. If his brother Vologeses, he solemnly warned Corbulo, had been inactive in the campaign just over, this was but due to his generous desire to appeal to reason rather than to the brute arbitrament of force. "Such magnanimous patience had its limits, and Rome ere now had had but too often reason to rue the splendid valour and good fortune of the Arsacid." Corbulo knew better. No sooner had Vardanes' rebellion been crushed than a revolt among the Hyrcanians on the south-east shore of the Caspian Sea had summoned Vologeses in hot haste to this distant quarter of his dominions. Save for a scanty troop of horse sent to his brother, the Parthian monarch was still far too busily employed to concern himself with Corbulo. Fortune once more had ranged herself on the Roman side, and admitted the reason of Corbulo's long delay. The Roman general could estimate at their true worth Tiridates' idle vapourings, which Vologeses' absence deprived of any small merit they might otherwise have possessed. He calmly acquainted the Armenian king with the generous terms of the Roman government, which now could be disclosed, as the foe had been compelled to ask for them. Tiridates might keep the throne of Armenia, but he must accept it as a gift from the clemency of the Roman Emperor. Couched in whatever terms, Corbulo's offer was in effect the renunciation by Nero of the policy of actual in favour of that of nominal suzerainty. The Roman government sincerely desired peace and quiet on its Eastern frontier.

Tiridates rejected the terms, after a vain attempt to ensnare Corbulo at a conference and slay him. The vigilance of the Roman baffled his transparent treachery, as Caesar in like case had defeated Ariovistus' unworthy wile. Tiridates sullenly withdrew, not yet satisfied of the Roman strength and ability to catch him or evict him from Armenia. The Roman offer was therefore cancelled. There was no fear that "necessitie would teach stronger resolutions" to their foe. Corbulo prepared to begin the campaign afresh in A.D.

59. It is the campaign of that year on which his fame as a great general chiefly rests.[1]

§ 4. The Campaign of Triumph, A.D. 59

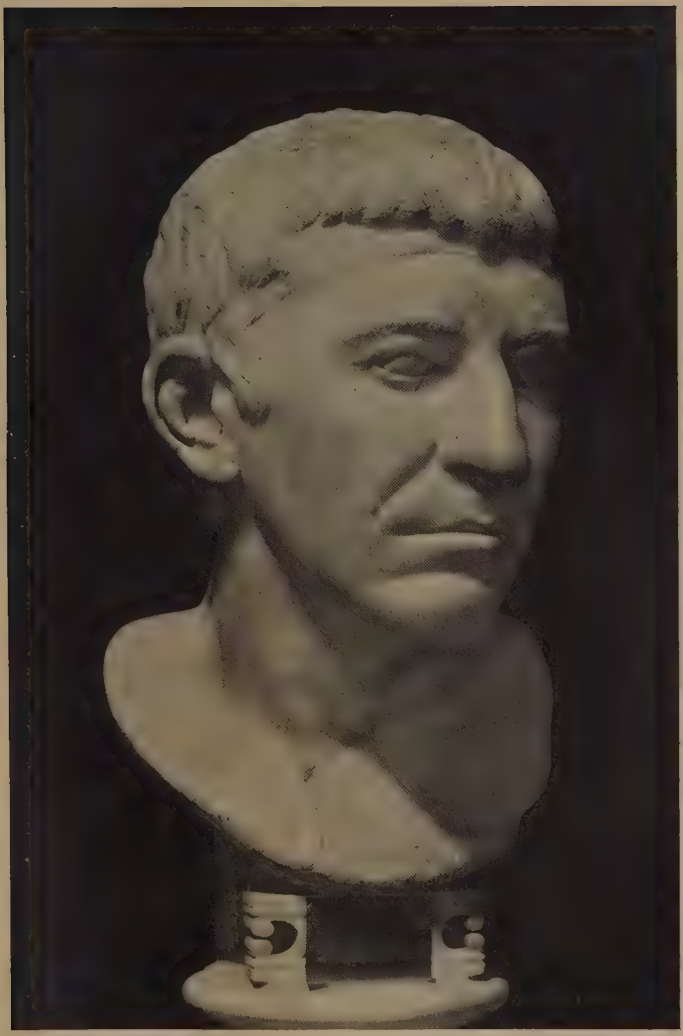
The campaign of A.D. 59 was opened by a sudden descent made by Tiridates upon the Roman line of communications, along which the convoys travelled from the Black Sea at Trapezus over the mountain rampart of the Kolat Dagh by the great trade highway to the Roman headquarters at Erzerûm. But the Roman had provided for his convoy's safety by a chain of blockhouses along the road, and the attack was easily repulsed. The Armenian light horse could do the fortified posts no harm. Corbulo himself could take the field with his mind at ease concerning his food supply.

His army mustered some twenty thousand men, or more. Possibly they were as many as thirty thousand. The Roman infantry were supplied by the Third and the Sixth and a part of the Tenth Legion. The auxiliaries furnished light armed troops, slingers, archers, and cavalry, in which latter arm the Iberian Horse were especially conspicuous. The general's plan was now no longer to pursue after Tiridates, but to strike straight at his capital city, Artaxata, in the far north-east. If in so doing he exposed his communications with Erzerûm to the risk of being cut, the army must carry its provisions with it and live on the country. His quick native auxiliaries could be trusted to forage far and wide. Tiridates would be compelled either to fight a pitched battle in defence of his capital, which the Roman eagerly desired, or to abandon it, an act surely fatal to the prestige of an alien and immigrant monarch. The issue justified Corbulo's strategy.

The city of Artaxata lay in the plain of the river Araxes, some two hundred miles as the crow flies from Erzerûm. It was situated on a promontory jutting out into the river, which swept round its base and secured it from attack save on the neck of land to the east. Here a trench and rampart completed its defences.[1]

To reach the city Corbulo had a choice of two routes. The first followed the great Persian highway over the Bingol Dagh to Zeidikan in the Alashkert plain, ran across the plain to Diadin, and climbing the easy watershed descended to Bayezid in the valley of the little Balukli Chai river. Thence

[1] See note at end.



CORBULO

FROM A BUST IN THE CAPITOLINE MUSEUM, ROME

Corbulo's route would quit the main road and strike north, skirting the lower slopes of the great snowy dome of Ararat, descending finally to the Araxes valley two thousand five hundred feet below, at the modern Russian fortress of Igdir. Here it was joined by the alternative route. This, the more northerly route, has of late years, since the Russo-Turkish War, sprung into importance through the fortification of Kars by the Russians. From Erzerûm, as far as the Turkish frontier, a Turkish—*i.e.*, a disreputable—track climbs to the Zevin plateau, the scene of a valiant stand against the Russians by a small Turkish force, crosses the frontier by Kara Urgan, and, henceforth a broad military highway, descends to the valley of a tributary of the Araxes at Kars. Thence to Kagyzman on the Araxes, and down the river to join the other route at Igdir the way is easy. This latter fortress therefore commands both routes, and is the almost certain site of the fort Volandum which barred the way in 59 to Corbulo's advance. This covered the approach to ancient Artaxata, as Igdir to modern Erivan, which is some forty miles away of easy going.

Corbulo selected the first route for his advance. It was shorter, better known, and its chief difficuties lay at the end of the march. Whereas the rival route by the modern Kars traversed such difficult country at the outset that no earlier start than in June would have been possible, and this, when the whole campaigning season must be less than half the year, was a grave matter. True it provided a better chance of co-operation on the flank with the Moschi, but even at the cost of exposing his left flank Corbulo preferred the advantages of an earlier start and the great highway over the Alashkert plain. His choice was justified by the ease of the march and the absence of opposition. It was only when he deployed from the south into the Araxes valley that Tiridates put in an appearance.[1]

In the path of Corbulo's advance lay Volandum, on the right bank of the river. Despatching his legate Cornelius Flaccus, and Insteius Capito, his camp prefect, to seize some smaller forts in the neighbourhood, the general himself assaulted Volandum with vigour. Under cover of his artillery, which, placed at a short distance away, searched the whole length of the walls, four storming parties moved to the attack, one to undermine the wall, the others to scale it by

[1] See note at end.

ladders or force an entrance by fire. After four or five hours' unrelaxed efforts the Romans burst into the fortress, hewing their way through the barricades at the gates, or climbing the ramparts, now stripped bare of defenders by fire of the artillery. The combatants were cut down to a man, the non-combatants sold on the spot by auction for benefit of the military chest, and the whole town was abandoned to plunder. Flaccus and Capito met with equal success, and the opposition in the valley being crushed and stripped bare of its permanent defences, only Tiridates and his army lay between the Romans and Artaxata, forty miles away.

Upon the city Corbulo now directed his entire army. The main road crossed the Araxes within range of the wall, whereby a force crossing by the bridge would be exposed defenceless to the enemy's fire. Corbulo therefore crossed by a ford higher up the stream, and, wheeling to his right, descended the left bank, approaching the city on its landward side. On his right flank lay the river. A line of low hills skirted his left. The column of advance was carefully arrayed to suit the ground. On the right flank marched the Third Legion in column, on the left, in similar formation, the Sixth. The centre was allotted to the companies of the Tenth. Behind these followed the impedimenta in the heart of the force, and one thousand cavalry formed the rear-guard. Archers, light-armed, and the rest of the cavalry were thrown out on the wings. The left wing was écheloned in advance, skirting the base of the hills. Thus if the foe attacked the head of the column the left wing would sweep round and enclose him. If he confined himself to descents upon the flank and rear, the light-armed and cavalry could repel these while the legionaries pushed forward steadily for Artaxata. The strictest orders were issued, forbidding any pursuit of the foe. Corbulo had studied in Roman military history the dangers of the favourite Parthian device of a feigned retreat to entice pursuit, isolate the pursuers, and open a gap in the main body.

Tiridates' intentions were thus anticipated and frustrated by the Roman. His assaults on flank and rear were beaten off with ease, and never delayed the steady advance. He did not dare to attack the head of the column. The death of a cavalry officer, who pursued the foe and fell pierced by arrows, confirmed the obedience to Corbulo's order and illustrated its

wisdom. As night fell the enemy disappeared and the Romans entrenched their position, while Corbulo despatched scouts to discover Tiridates' movements, intending to surround the city under cover of darkness if the king had taken refuge in it. But his scouts reporting that Tiridates had fled for the open country, though whether in the direction of Media or of Albania they could not tell, Corbulo kept his whole force quietly within his entrenchments. Next morning the Romans advanced in skirmishing order upon the city. But before battle could be joined, Artaxata surrendered. The king had fled. The sack of Volandum had warned the citizens of their fate in case of resistance. Probably in early July of the year A.D. 59 Corbulo captured the enemy's capital city. The king's escape was to be regretted, but could not have been frustrated. A great success had been won and at a very small cost.

Once in possession of Artaxata, Corbulo had to decide speedily between three alternative courses of action which were open to him. It was impossible, he assures us, in view of the size of the city and the numbers of his own army, to both hold the town and prosecute further offensive operations. Moreover, a bare three months yet remained to him during which military operations would be feasible. Hence he could either retreat to his base, burning the city, and satisfied with the success already won ; or he could garrison and hold the city, keeping open his communications with Erzerûm and Pontus along the route he had traversed. This would need his entire force. But neither of these two plans was attractive. Tiridates presumably had fled southwards, and might be expected to reappear in South Armenia. None could tell how soon Vologeses would not be free to act, and then he too would invade Armenia from the South. Moreover, the Armenians were for the time suitably impressed by the capture of their capital. But if the Romans were to remain inactive, that impression would quickly become a faint one. And neither plan promised in any measure the submission of Tiridates or his expulsion from the country. The ignorant barbarian would not recognise the end of the war in the fall of his capital.

One plan remained, a plan of great daring in conception and likely hazard in execution. On the extreme South of Armenia, guarding the two great passes over Mount Masius from Mesopotamia into Armenia, the Rubbut and the

Mardin passes, was situated the strongly fortified city of Tigranocerta, the second or new capital of the country. It lay on the Nicephorius River, which is to-day the Zrgan, tributary to the Khabur and so to the Euphrates. Built by the greatest of Armenian kings, Tigranes, some century and a half before to guard his realm against the Parthian enemy, Tigranocerta offered to the Roman general a second objective of the greatest importance. Holding that city, he could defy Vologeses to find entrance into Armenia, and would close the great southern gate of the kingdom to the fugitive Tiridates. From it he could open up communications easily with a new base in Syria. And the winter in South Armenia was milder than in the inclement regions of the Araxes valley. Moreover, the Iberians could be trusted to keep an ever watchful eye upon affairs in the north.

None the less the plan was a great and bold one. Between Artaxata and Tigranocerta lay some 300 miles of rugged country of mountain and lake, unknown to the Roman, hostile, and promising a resistance and difficulties which it was impossible in any way to estimate beforehand. Maps he had none. For food he must be dependent on the unknown country. In evacuating Artaxata he must carry all his troops with him, burn his boats behind him, cut himself loose once and for all from his communications and his base either in Cappadocia or Pontus, and, plunging into the heart of one of the wildest countries in Asia, trust to his military genius to extricate him from this, and to the triumphant issue and prosperous results to justify a march which stands on record as one of the boldest in military history. Few generals would perhaps have dared the risk under a burning July sun, and yet with an Armenian winter fast approaching. Corbulo boldly decided for the advance, and proved himself a Roman general of the highest type thereby. Caesar could have done no better.[1]

Artaxata was burned to the ground, the lives of its inhabitants being of course spared. A curious atmospheric effect of sun and cloud observed just before the city's destruction seemed to the credulous to foreshadow its doom, and was used by the general in all probability to cover in the eyes of his army, thus deprived of their stronghold, and in those of the gaping crowds in Rome, craving ever for the

[1] See note at end.

sensational and the picturesque, what in reality was a military necessity. The city destroyed, Corbulo set out on his long hazardous march.[1]

Only the first small section of the road was familiar to him, that back to the modern town of Bayezid. Thence it was all new country. And at Bayezid he had to decide between a choice of routes. In the heart of Armenia lies Lake Van, the ancient Arsene or Thospitis, a great sheet of water twice the area of the lake of Geneva, at an altitude of over 5500 feet above sea level. The great extinct volcanoes on the northern shore tower from the water's edge to a height not far short of 14,000 feet above the sea. But the soil of the basin itself is so productive that local Armenian tradition places here the Garden of Eden. A river, the Bitlis Su, rises in the mountains to the south-west of the lake, and flows south to the Tigris. Armenia being cut into a series of great horizontal valley sections by the mountains, which for the most part trend east and west, the pass running south from Bitlis to Sert is to Southern Armenia the one great "door between the highlands and the lowlands,"[2] the one and only great strategical highway east of Diarbekr. Down this pass Corbulo was bound to march. But to reach Bitlis he could either choose the route to the west of Lake Van or that on its eastern shore. The former led down the upper Murad Su to the plain of Melazkert and Mush, thence crossing the plateau by a gentle rise to Bitlis. The latter crossed a lofty ridge to the modern Pergri at the extreme north-east corner of the lake, and led round its shores to Bitlis. This second was the rougher route, but saved some sixty or seventy miles, and there is little doubt that his guides led Corbulo and his army by this.[1]

From the natives the Romans at first experienced little opposition, a result due to Corbulo's orders against indiscriminate looting, and to his untiring vigilance. Some submitted quietly. Others fled from their villages in terror, their flight expedited by occasional pursuit. But natives who were found lurking in caves and hiding-places by the way were handled mercilessly. Brushwood was piled at the entrance and set on fire, and the unhappy occupants were smoked out by the plan so popular with the Boers in their wars with the Zulus. One tribe, the Mardi, harried the line of march over the slopes of the Ala Dagh to the lake, until Corbulo des-

[1] See note at end. [2] Lynch.

patched his Iberian allies to pursue the raiders even to their mountain tops.

But if the natives proved no serious obstacle, the test of physical endurance imposed by the march itself was severe. The plateau to be crossed before the lake could be reached was arid and exposed to the rays of the fierce July sun of the Armenian summer. At a height some 8500 feet above sea level, the army sorely felt the lack of water. The ridge must be crossed speedily and marches had to be long. Corn there was as yet none ripe, nor would be for another month. Of animal food indeed in the land of vast flocks and nomad herds there was plenty. But such a diet was not only ill-suited in the summer heat, but it was always peculiarly distasteful to the Roman soldier, and Caesar's own troops at the siege of Avaricum, over a century before, had counted the necessity of such a fare as chief among their hardships. Still Corbulo's men pushed forward unflinchingly, cheered by their general, who shared in all their distresses and bore patiently with their grumblings, until at last, to their great satisfaction, they descended to the shores of the lake, and the ripe cornlands and orchards which fringed it. Here they pushed on merrily, meeting with scanty opposition. One Armenian fortress, probably on the site of Bitlis, was taken by storm. Another, perhaps at Sert, guarding the southern issue of the pass, had to be reduced by blockade. The Upper Tigris was crossed without difficulty, and the Romans climbed the chain of the Mount Masius, the last barrier separating the army from its goal. Here an attempt was made on Corbulo's life, but the assassins were discovered in time and punished. Pushing vigorously on through the Mardin pass, the army gained its southern extremity and saw stretching out to the dim distance the great Mesopotamian plain, the limit of their enterprise, and almost at their very feet the city of Tigranocerta.

Some little show of resistance was made. But a catapult hurled the head of a captured chieftain into the very middle of the Armenian council of war, and the terrified city surrendered at discretion. Great amity was displayed on both sides. Corbulo had selected the city as his winter quarters, and it was important to conciliate the goodwill of the inhabitants, who on their side feasted the Romans sumptuously. A garrison of young and high-spirited troops in the neighbouring fort of Legerda did indeed defy the general, but,

defeated in a rash sally, they yielded to the assault of the Roman columns. With this success the long campaign closed.[1]

That campaign reflects the greatest credit upon Corbulo. In the few months available to him he had marched his army through the length and the breadth of Armenia, quelling all opposition, driving the hostile king a fugitive from the country, taking and destroying one of the enemy's capital cities, and finally occupying the other. He had displayed vigour and celerity which were crowned with success. He had dared to sever himself entirely from his line of communications, and, plunging into the heart of a rugged, unknown land, despite all difficulties of supplies, had inspired his troops with his own cheerful endurance, and led them triumphantly out to gain a new and easier line of communications and a city in which to winter. Inasmuch as the foe was in every respect inferior, it may be urged that the Roman's daring was perhaps less than was Lee's with the army of Northern Virginia in Pennsylvania; the prize to be won was perhaps not so notable as when, in August, 1880, Sir Frederick Roberts marched from Kabul to Kandahar to rescue the survivors of Maiwand, he too daring to quit his line of communications and pierce a hostile, mountainous, and little-known country, exposed through the length of over two hundred miles to all the attacks of a fierce and skilful savage foe. But all three campaigns alike, the Roman, the American, and the British, display the daring of the leader and the justice of the confidence which each reposed in his army. Corbulo's discipline had reaped golden results. His army adds to the long scroll of praise a new honour alike for Roman general and Roman soldier. The legionary of Nero's Principate is no whit inferior to the soldier of the Roman Republic in daring and endurance. No nation can lose its supremacy with men and leaders such as these.

§ 5. Return to the Augustan Policy, A.D. 60, 61

The campaigning year A.D. 60, opened with an incursion made by the active Tiridates from Media, where he had taken refuge, into Eastern Armenia. This was now the only avenue of approach into his former kingdom which remained open to him. No geographical detail of the campaign is preserved, but Corbulo's celerity and his able dispositions

[1] See note at end.

drove the Parthian again in despair from the country. The Roman general then devoted himself vigorously to his task of pacification, which consisted in the harrying by fire and sword of the lands of all Armenians hostile to the Roman cause. While he was engaged in this pursuit a new task was suddenly imposed upon him.

The question of the treatment of Armenia engaged the serious attention of the Roman Government. Tiridates' refusal of its earlier terms, and Corbulo's great and startling successes had now changed the whole aspect of the situation. Annexation indeed was temporarily an accomplished fact. But Nero had no intention of locking up permanently in the country so large a force as Corbulo's army, and the strategic disabilities of the policy at a time when war with Vologeses might at any moment be kindled were clear. He therefore naturally fell back upon the familiar Augustan policy of actual suzerainty exercised over and through a prince appointed by Rome and owning her control. This policy had led to the war, it is true, but the triumph of the Roman arms, it might be hoped, had diminished any danger of its recurrence at least from within Armenia itself. And the new prince could be assisted against the Parthian peril by a small Roman force in the country. It was at once the cheapest and most obvious policy for Nero to adopt after the campaign of A.D. 59.

In the summer of A.D. 60, therefore, there arrived in the country one Tigranes, a grandson of the former king of Cappadocia, Archelaus, who thus was counted as belonging to the Cappadocian Royal Family, although he was also a great-grandson of the Jewish prince, Herod the Great. Tigranes presented to Corbulo Nero's letters mandatory directing his installation as King of Armenia. He had been educated at Rome, like most of the claimants already sent out by the Roman Emperors to Eastern thrones, and could therefore be trusted to be loyal. The Armenian nobility always preferred a pure Arsacid, but, as Tiridates was the only pure Arsacid available, this could not very well be helped. Corbulo must judge for himself how large a Roman garrison must be given to Tigranes in order to secure him against internal plot and external attack. The great general himself was at the same time appointed governor of Syria, where Quadratus had lately died. In Syria he would be on the spot to exercise a controlling supervision over Tigranes and the Eastern frontier generally. The appointment of course was the very best

possible, and no hint or trace of jealousy or fear in Nero of his brilliant lieutenant can be discovered. With a friendly king over the river, Cappadocia could, as always, be left denuded of regular troops.

Despite the open discontent of a faction of the Armenian nobles, Corbulo placed Tigranes on the throne and left with him in the country a thousand legionaries, three cohorts of allies, and two squadrons of horse, in all some five thousand men. The neighbouring kings were also skilfully enlisted in his interest by the grant to each of them of a slice of Armenian territory adjacent to his kingdom. Thus Pharasmanes of Iberia, Polemon of Pontus, Aristobulus of Lesser Armenia, and Antiochus of Commagene, might be trusted actively to support a king in Armenia on whose retention of that crown depended their own possession of their new territories. This done, Corbulo withdrew with the bulk of his army to his own province of Syria and the year came to an end.[1]

If the reversion to the Augustan policy proved after a few months' trial an ignominious failure, this was due to the new king Tigranes himself. In A.D. 61, Vologeses had at last freed himself from the various difficulties which for the last six years had effectively prevented any interference by him in Armenia on his brother Tiridates' behalf. That brother was now back at his Court, a fugitive, melancholy, unemployed. Yet the Parthian king hesitated to champion his cause by war. The Roman was no foe to be lightly provoked under adverse conditions. Despite Tiridates' presence, Vologeses showed no disposition to break the peace. But he was roused from his inactivity by an unprovoked aggression by the very foolish Tigranes. That king, eager it seems to compensate himself for the narrowing of his frontiers on the west and north, and desirous to show himself a prince of valour to his new and discontented subjects, suddenly made a raid into the neighbouring Parthian satrapy of Media Adiabene, and pressed its ruler Monobazus so sorely, that the latter actually threatened Vologeses that, unless speedy succour came, he on his account would come to terms with the Romans. Vologeses had now no choice left but to take the field in person. The Roman anger with Tigranes might well be great. It was not for such a purpose that Nero had sent him to rule Armenia. For the Parthian lion at last had been effectually roused from his lair, and by him, this petty princeling of a day!

[1] See note at end.

Vologeses made his dispositions with skill. Tiridates, with an escort of picked Parthian horse under a famous cavalry leader, Monaeses, and with such auxiliaries as Monobazus could give him, was sent to drive Tigranes back and invade after him into Armenia. Meanwhile he himself with the bulk of his army threatened Syria. At least he might hope so to detain Corbulo in his province and prevent his presence on the scene of action in Armenia.

The situation was a new and a perilous one, but Corbulo took his measures with promptness. Their wisdom is as undoubted as it has failed to earn its just recognition. Leave Syria himself he could not. It was apparently the main object of attack, and he now was its actual governor. Moreover the foe at last was the Parthian. He therefore kept his veteran legions, the famous Third, Sixth, and Tenth, to guard the Euphrates on the Syrian frontier, and fortified all possible means of ingress into the province. Yet Tigranes could not be left in the lurch. The other two of the Syrian legions, the Fourth and the Twelfth, were at once sent to his help. These had not the experience nor the discipline of the troops which had marched from Erzerûm to Tigranocerta. Yet Corbulo not unnaturally retained the best troops for what seemed obviously the most important duty. And at least he appointed as commander of the Armenian expeditionary force one who had been practically his own Chief of Staff in the recent war, a practised and able soldier, Vettius Bolanus, with one Verulanus Severus to help him.

With the insight, however, of a general and a judge of men, Corbulo considered as well the probable course of events. He distrusted Tigranes, who obviously had forfeited the confidence which Nero had placed in him. He saw that the king was in the long run no match for Tiridates and his Armenian sympathisers with or without the two Roman legions. He must anticipate a possible loss of Armenia again. In that case the old difficult and dangerous problem of an undefended Cappadocia presented itself for solution. And again, as in A.D. 54, any reconquest of Armenia must be attempted from the side of Cappadocia, not of Syria. There was little indeed to be gained, and much indeed might be lost, by an invasion from Syria into the waterless deserts by Carrhae. The Romans in Syria must stand on the defensive and leave offensive operations to the general and army in Cappadocia. Corbulo himself must be in Syria. There was now, in view of the Parthian

attack, only one solution. And Corbulo with true military instinct realised this when he appealed now to Nero to divide the command on the Eastern frontier, and to appoint another general to take charge of a Cappadocian army and to superintend the war in Armenia. He himself was now bound to fill Quadratus' place. Another must fill his own former one. So long as no *double* offensive by widely separated columns is in view, there is no inherent strategic weakness in such a divided command. And so strongly did Corbulo realise the need, that he secretly urged Bolanus to act in Armenia strictly on the defensive, and not to precipitate, but to postpone if possible, a conflict. Tigranes himself was a poor little pawn in the whole intricate game. It was plain common sense to delay hostilities if possible until the arrival from Rome of some general to take command, and for his appointment Corbulo had sent to the Emperor an urgent request. If Corbulo were to remain governor of Syria, there was no possible military alternative.[1]

This Nero at once recognised. It had doubtless been wiser had Corbulo been again charged with the whole war of offence, and a new legate sent to Syria. But this would have caused greater delay, and awkward questions of precedence might have arisen, as the legate of Syria was naturally the superior in rank to any other Roman official in the far East. Nero therefore kept Corbulo in that position, and chose as new general for Cappadocia one Caesennius Paetus.

Long before he could arrive affairs had swept on decisively. Monaeses drove Tigranes to take refuge in Tigranocerta, which town he besieged vigorously but without result. Vologeses, encamped at Nisibis, used to the full the advantage which his interior lines gave him over Corbulo, threatening Syria, and being always in a position to assist Monaeses. Corbulo, however, sent to him a vigorous ultimatum. He must withdraw the Parthians from Armenia, or he, Corbulo, would invade Mesopotamia. This message found Vologeses on his side in some difficulties. As always in their history the Parthians could make no way at all with the siege of a fortress. And a locust swarm had destroyed the fodder for his horses, so that his chief arm of offence was seriously crippled. The king sent to Syria proposals of his own for an armistice. Vologeses agreed to withdraw Tiridates and all his troops from Armenia, and to retire himself from Nisibis.

[1] See note at end.

on the understanding that Corbulo for his part would recall every Roman soldier in like manner from the country. Armenia for the winter of A.D. 61-62 was to be left "empty," and Vologeses for his part would at once send envoys to Rome to discuss the whole situation.

Corbulo accepted the armistice on these terms. It was a serious responsibility, but he undertook it. Two motives determined him. He was eager to temporise, since, in the first place, Paetus had not arrived, and in the second the whole question must be a matter for Nero's decision and not his own. He was thus compelled to purchase the Parthian withdrawal from Armenia. He paid a double price. Tigranes was practically deposed and evicted. This Corbulo allowed, for that prince was guilty of the whole trouble. And in this Corbulo judged Nero rightly, for Tigranes henceforth vanishes completely from the scene. He was never allowed to return to Armenia. The second item of the price was more serious, namely, the evacuation of Armenia by the Romans. Yet the alternative was an expedition to rescue Tigranes. And the Parthians were to evacuate it as well. If the negotiations at Rome failed, it would become a race for the country, and the Romans in Cappadocia had a handicap over the Parthians, as the event proved. Corbulo's acceptance of the armistice under the circumstances was a wise and politic act.

During the winter, therefore, negotiations went on busily at Rome, and Armenia was left to take care of itself. The two legions sent to the country were withdrawn to winter over the border in Cappadocia in huts hastily thrown up. If war were to continue, everything should be ready for the new commander in the spring.

And Nero decided not only for war but for the boldest policy of all, direct annexation. His decision is intelligible enough. Two policies had seemingly failed, and this alone was left to him. The Augustan policy had again proved to be a very dismal failure, and Nero would have no more of incompetent princes sent out from Rome. To revert to a Parthian prince was always possible, but this might seem still a poor result of such successes as Corbulo's. It is possible that Nero's published intention to annex Armenia was designed only to terrify Tiridates into submission. It is more probable that this bold departure from all the policy of his predecessors was seriously intended by Nero, disgusted with the failure of his former experiments, and willing to try the

boldest experiment of all. It was most unfortunate that his customary skill in the selection of his generals failed the Emperor here completely, and that the new general Paetus proved himself hopelessly incompetent, and a misleading braggart and coward to boot.[1]

§ 6. Annexation and its Results. The Campaign of Rhandeia, A.D. 62

With the return of Vologeses' unsuccessful envoys to him in the spring of A.D. 62, hostilities were reopened. Paetus at the same time arrived in Cappadocia and set busily to work to prepare his army of invasion. He had under him the Fourth and Twelfth Legions, which had wintered in the country, and a new legion, the Fifth (Macedonica), was on its way from Moesia to join him, to the great discontent of the governor of that province, who himself was actively employed at the time.[2] But the call for fresh legions in one province always meant their loss to another, and it says a good deal at least for the vigour of Nero's foreign policy that, with a call for troops actual or threatening in Britain, on the Danube, and in Judaea, he had determined on the forward movement in Armenia. Besides his legionaries, Paetus collected a large number of auxiliaries from Pontus, Cappadocia, and Galatia. His army cannot have been far inferior in strength to Corbulo's in 57. The use he made of it was very different.

Without waiting for the arrival of the troops from Moesia, Paetus proclaimed the annexation of Armenia, and crossed the Euphrates at Isoghli in the early summer of the year. Like Corbulo, his first duty was to select and fortify a suitable base of operations in Armenia itself, as Melitene was too distant. But his avowed object being to devote his attention to that part of the country which Corbulo had left untouched (a comparison with Corbulo's achievements might be usefully avoided), and to move straight upon Tigranocerta from the Cappadocian frontier by the valley of the Upper Tigris, his base must needs be dependent on Cappadocia and not on Pontus for its supplies. A site on the plain of Kharput was the obvious one. This little plain lies south of the Murad Su, just before this branch of the Euphrates joins its fellow the Kara Su at Keban Maden. Kharput itself, the modern town, is within easy reach of Malatia, the way lying across a fertile

[1] See note at end. [2] See below, Chap. VI., sect. 6.

plain, known even in antiquity as the "Fair Plain."[1] North of the Murad indeed there was no good line of communications with Cappadocia, only a rough track, which crossed the stream at Pertek, and itself led along the northern bank to the junction of the tributary, the Peri Chai, from the north. One mile above this junction, where the Murad Su is fordable in summer, lay on the southern bank of the river an ancient fortress, Arsamosata by name, the modern Schimshat. Between this and Kharput the little river, the Bokydere, trickles to-day into the Murad on its southern bank with such water as is spared to it from irrigation purposes.

Any convenient site in the neighbourhood of Kharput might have been selected by Paetus for his fortified base, so long as this were on the south of the Murad Su—*e.g.*, at the junction of the Bokydere with the Murad Su. But only a site on the *south* bank secured his communications with the Melitene (Isoghli) crossing of the river, in the event of an attack upon it by an enemy. Such an attack, however, could only come from the south, and the river, of course, would interpose one obstacle the more in its way, if the base camp were pitched on the northern bank. But it may safely be asserted that no such immediate and very conditional tactical advantage could for one moment outweigh the most serious strategical defects of any such position. The only possible justification for the choice of the northern site over the southern would be a suddenly apprehended attack from an enemy in overwhelming force, leaving time for scanty fortifications only. And even so a general who thus abandoned his communications over the plain of Kharput at such urgent and unexpected instance must have felt his position indeed precarious, unless he were well provisioned and could expect relief from the outside. No other conditions could justify such a sacrifice of elementary rules of strategy to a defensive tactical advantage as is implied by Paetus' actual choice of a site on the northern bank.[2]

And Paetus did not have that justification. He pitched his camp at Rhandeia, a spot some forty or fifty miles from the Isoghli crossing, on the northern bank of the Murad Su, and a short distance west of Arsamosata on the other side of the river, and began to fortify it. But his impatience was great. The short Armenian summer was passing rapidly away. He did not stay to complete the fortifications, but

[1] Polybius. [2] See note at end.

marched out to the war, leaving an unfinished base camp behind him. This fact shows how little he anticipated an attack upon his position, and deprives his choice of a site of its one possible small and unsatisfactory justification. Hence it is only his impatience which explains that choice. With a river in front of the camp, and no great risk, to his thinking, of an assault upon it, he could, he imagined, start the sooner on his expedition, as he could afford to leave the defences half made. Paetus in fact thus early proved himself not only lacking in Corbulo's wise patience, but without prudence or imagination, and entirely incapable of grasping the patent facts of a military situation. His campaign was a fitting sequel to the prelude.

He marched his troops over the ridge of mountains which separated the plain of Kharput from the valley of the Upper Tigris by the one pass over that barrier, the Pass of Arghana. This presents no great difficulty. His plan was to march down the Tigris, ravaging as he went; then, diverging beyond the modern town of Diarbekr to the Rubbut Pass on the south, thus reach his objective, Tigranocerta. The city was empty of a garrison, either Roman or Parthian, and Paetus must have hoped to take it before the foe seized it. This was an additional reason for his hasty start, but cannot justify Rhandeia. Neither did he attain his object. For the approach of winter found him in hot retreat to his base, without any record to his credit save the capture of a few forts *en route*, and a good deal of plundering and wasting. Supplies had given out, and he retired in the late autumn to Rhandeia. Thence he despatched a vainglorious message to Nero, speaking of the war as now practically ended by his efforts. He was speedily and rudely undeceived.[1]

For meanwhile Vologeses with his whole army had been demonstrating against Corbulo's position at Zeugma, hoping to force an entrance into Syria. Corbulo, knowing that all offensive operations were entrusted to the army of Cappadocia, remained on the defensive, displaying in his dispositions orthodox tactics. Any river is best defended not from one bank only, but from connected positions on both banks. Corbulo, under cover of the fire of a fleet which the Romans maintained on the Euphrates, employed his engineers to construct a pontoon bridge from Zeugma to the enemy's bank, and threw his auxiliaries over it, pushing them forward to

[1] See note at end.

seize and fortify a low crest of hills which commanded the passage. His success was complete. Vologeses, seeing the bridge head occupied in force, abandoned his thoughts of forcing the passage. Corbulo had won a tactical victory.

But his opponent on his side could grasp a situation. The Parthian now enjoyed the entire advantages of the salient frontier, due to the conjoint facts of Paetus' advance in S. Armenia, Corbulo's presence in Syria, and his own great mobility. Frustrated on one side by Corbulo, he changed his entire plan of campaign in a moment, and resolved to hurl his entire force against Paetus, though it was now late autumn. He could, thanks to his mobility and his position, engage the Cappadocian commander long before Corbulo could have news of it. And if his dangerous opponent inferred his intentions from his sudden disappearance, still Vologeses held the upper hand. Corbulo's troops could never reach Paetus so quickly as could his Parthian horse travelling by a shorter route. Before the eyes of the Syrian legate the Parthians evacuated their position, wheeled northwards, and vanished in the desert, leaving the Syrian frontier lonely of the enemy.

Corbulo had done his part. It was idle for him to set out to help the other Roman army. He did not know where it could be found. He was not asked for help. His task was to defend Syria against Parthian attack and Parthian ruse. In any case he was, thanks to the strategic frontier implied by the Roman occupation of Armenia, quite unable to co-operate with Paetus, or even send him tidings before the Parthian should meet him. His able defence of Zeugma had driven the foe against his colleague. This could not be helped, neither could he pursue slowly after the quickly vanishing enemy, nor risk dividing his own force to send part of it to try to discover Paetus. The army of Cappadocia and its general must look after themselves. And surely as Romans they were capable of this. It remained for Paetus to withstand the storm which burst upon him from the south.

It caught him unsuspecting and unprepared. He displayed miserable indecision. Thinking the year's campaign over he had allowed many of his men away on furlough.[1] The Fifth Legion was no nearer than Pontus. His camp was in a strategically indefensible position, and not even fully fortified. At the tidings of the king of Parthia's approach he seems to have lost his head. Instead of setting his gloomy troops to

[1] See note at end.

work at the fortifications, and leaving it to his strong position, and the coming winter to repel the foe, he tried to cover his previous error by boasting to his army that Romans had no need of ramparts against an enemy, and marched out to look for Vologeses. A scouting party was cut off, and he fled back to Rhandeia. The Parthian delayed his advance, and out Paetus marched again, his troops losing confidence in their general with every march and countermarch. Finally he arranged his defence in a manner which a Sandhurst cadet could criticise. On top of the pass at Arghana (which the enemy, coming from Diarbekr, must needs cross) he placed three thousand picked infantry. In the Kharput plain were massed his best cavalry, the Pannonian horse. The non-combatants were shut up with a small garrison in Arsamosata. He himself with his main force retired over the river to Rhandeia, at least twenty-five miles away from the vanguard holding the pass. In face of the enemy Paetus had divided his force; divided his very vanguard into two isolated detachments; left them without supports; placed a river between his main army and the advance guard; practically sacrificed this to annihilation, and his sole chance of communications with Cappadocia defenceless to the enemy. Then reluctantly he sends off an orderly to Corbulo with the bare tidings of Vologeses' approach. And yet attempts have been made to save his military reputation at the expense of Corbulo's honesty, and Tacitus' judgment!

Corbulo naturally enough, when Paetus' orderly arrived, saw no reason for great haste. His colleague had not requested help. But he gave orders for a picked force of some eight thousand men to make their preparations to march north. As soon as an urgent appeal for aid arrived he lost not an hour. It is not a happy suggestion that his earlier tardiness was due to his desire to let Paetus involve himself hopelessly and so himself win the greater fame by extricating him.

Vologeses swept down on the unhappy Paetus, crushed the vanguard in the pass, drove the cavalry in rout over the plain. A few wounded men straggled into the camp and increased the alarm. Paetus broke down the bridge over the river,[1] and his communications over the plain were cut. Arsamosata was left to its own devices. Vologeses attacked the fort, and sate down to besiege Rhandeia. A messenger got through the enemy's lines and apprised Corbulo of the desperate situation.

[1] See note at end.

That general marched at once in hot haste at the head of his selected band to the rescue. Camels accompanied the force for transport. With stirring words of exhortation to his veterans he pushed on night and day. Through the friendly lands of Commagene and Cappadocia he hurried, sparing no toil or effort, and reached the Isoghli crossing. There at the river, forty-five miles away from the beleaguered garrison, Paetus, the coward, fled into his camp. All was lost. Rhandeia had surrendered two days before.

For Vologeses, knowing the chance of Corbulo's arrival, had pressed home the siege with vigour. Paetus' troops, clustering behind inadequate defences, had no confidence in their general. Everything they knew of him was to his discredit. Courage and discipline failed alike. Paetus had no control over his men, and he was forced to capitulate. He blustered like a weak man, but Vologeses was grimly inexorable. With rescue within three days' march, Rhandeia disgracefully surrendered.

Paetus had bought of Vologeses permission for himself and his men to depart unscathed by agreeing that the Romans should evacuate Armenia completely. Every fort and all their supplies were to be handed over. Vologeses was to send envoys afterwards to Nero if he chose. And as a sign of the Roman degradation the king imposed upon the conquered the task of building a bridge over the river to the southern bank. Paetus endeavoured to hide this last disgrace by the vain pretence that the bridge would be useful to the Romans in their withdrawal. In fact they never used it at all, but fled along the northern shore in guise of a routed mass of fugitives, amid the jeers and gibes of the enemy, who crowded into the camp to mock them before the evacuation was completed. The king himself spared them the last indignity of his presence at their departure, but his men plundered the vanquished mercilessly as they fled, never daring to resist. Vologeses himself, suspicious, though without cause, of treachery in the workmanship of the bridge, made his triumphant entry into Rhandeia, fording the river mounted on an elephant and escorted by his brilliant Parthian cavalry, while the heaped up arms and bodies of the dead Romans testified to the completeness of his victory, and the disgrace of Paetus' army. Paetus himself outstripped his line of stragglers, and, crossing the river where best he could, perhaps at Pertek, by dint of a forty mile flight in one day was first to carry Corbulo the news of the surrender.

Corbulo's wrath with the defeated general was extreme. The whole fruit of his own labours and toils seemed to have been thrown away by the other's incompetence and cowardice. His own troops greeted their defeated comrades with pity and sympathy, and no word of reproach or invidious comparison was heard in the rescue camp at Isoghli. But in his report home Corbulo refused to spare Paetus. He was, he declared, amply provisioned and could easily have held out. As it was, he surrendered when the relieving army was within a three days' march. It may be admitted that Paetus did not know this when he surrendered. The intelligence department of the Roman army seems to have been badly organised, and in fact a heliograph and a few signallers might have saved a modern army in a like state in Rhandeia from despair. But nothing can exonerate Paetus from the charge of incompetence crowned with cowardice, and the responsibility of a sore disgrace to the Roman arms. Corbulo rejected scornfully his proposal for an immediate joint invasion of the country, as Vologeses, said Paetus eagerly, had now left it. So much the greater need, Corbulo replied, for him to hasten back to his own province Syria. Moreover it was now late in the year. And indeed he could hardly under any circumstances have consented to join forces with Paetus in a campaign.

So far as lay in his power Corbulo redressed the situation in the winter of A.D. 62–63. Ignoring Paetus altogether, he agreed with Vologeses to withdraw his own troops west of the Euphrates again and destroy his fortifications on the opposite bank, if the Parthian also evacuated Armenia and sent envoys to Nero to treat. Paetus spent the winter in Cappadocia. Armenia was again, as in the preceding winter, left to itself. The memory of Corbula's victories was now balanced by the indelible dishonour of the capitulation of Rhandeia. Only the general himself and his veterans remained with their fame untarnished, and both Vologeses and Tiridates realised clearly that they had not defeated Corbulo. But the policy of annexation could hardly survive the blow.

§ 7. The Last Campaign, A.D. 63

Paetus' lying despatches and Corbulo's true report reached Nero in the spring of A.D. 63. The situation was clear to him. In one respect only was it better than that of A.D. 58. Vologeses and Tiridates were now both willing to treat with

him, and there might be hopes of a settlement. The annexation policy and that of actual suzerainty were dead, and could hardly be revived. The experiment had failed. Nero fell back in thought to his own earliest policy, that of nominal suzerainty exercised over a Parthian prince.

But he made not the least mistake. This policy was, as it were, offered him as a gracious concession by the Parthian, and after a Parthian victory. It was not only the pride of the Roman which was up in arms. To accept the proposals under such conditions would have been of but sorry promise for the future. With rare political wisdom Nero decided to reject his own policy when it was offered him. The concession should be on his side, not on Vologeses'. The extra delay and cost mattered little to a Roman. Nero refused the "dishonourable peace," choosing instead to face again the "uncertainties of war." The Parthian envoys were given a friendly reception, but departed with the clear understanding that the Roman Emperor would hear of no peace, unless Tiridates came himself as a suppliant to ask his favour.

The war was to continue, and Nero's measures show no diminution of wisdom or vigour. Paetus was at once recalled, and dismissed on his arrival in Rome with contemptuous mercy by the Emperor. Corbulo was given entire control of all the military forces of the east, with *carte blanche* to act as he thought best, while to enable him to devote his undivided attention to the serious military task in front of him, a new governor, one C. Cestius Gallus, was sent out to Syria to take over his *civil* functions only. Temporarily, Nero adopted one of the two suggested alternatives for a reorganisation of the whole eastern frontier system, and appointed one supreme military commander-in-chief for the whole frontier.[1] Dangerous politically this might be, but Corbulo's military genius alone could save the situation, and Nero trusted in his loyalty. And yet another legion, the Fifteenth (Apollonia), was summoned from Pannonia to re-inforce his army.

Corbulo used his "greater command," his "*maius imperium*," as skilfully as Pompeius had used his similar authority many years before. Paetus' demoralised legions were transferred to Syria. He himself marched into Armenia by the old Melitene route at the head of a larger force of legionaries than any which had hitherto been employed in these wars. His army of some forty thousand men included as many as four legions,

[1] *Cf. supra*, pp. 156, 157.

the veteran Third and Sixth, and the newly arrived Fifth and Fifteenth. His expedition might well recall Lucullus' old triumphs, and that not only in the route chosen. Vologeses and Tiridates were now at last genuinely alarmed, and desirous of peace. Corbulo's ravaging of the country completed the impression. Roman pride and policy exacted the crowning sign of Parthian submission. Corbulo selected Rhandeia, the scene of last year's disgrace, as the place where Tiridates should finally recognise "the power of the Roman Emperor to give and to take away the crown of Armenia."[1] There Tiridates, in the midst of a brilliant display, laid his diadem before the Emperor's effigy in presence of Corbulo his representative, and undertook solemnly that he would journey to Rome to receive it from the Emperor's hands. The general showed his guest round the camp, the Parthian's admiration increasing at every step, and a rich banquet closed the eventful day. On the morrow Tiridates departed to take leave of his brothers before setting out for Rome. Some delay must ensue before that could be accomplished, and Vologeses had to be reassured by skilful diplomacy that no unworthy act of submission would be required of the prince on his journey or in Rome. But the war, the long and weary war, was over, and the temple of Janus in Rome was closed at last in A.D. 64, as a sign that peace had come back again to the whole Empire.

Corbulo himself remained for some time on the plain of Kharput with his favourite Third Legion.[2] The general to whom both Nero and Rome and Roman military history owed so much, who by his nine years' military service in the east has justly earned a niche in the Temple of Fame, is to make but one more appearance on the stage of this history, and that a sad one. We part from him here at the height of his glory, alike a never defeated general and a flawless diplomatist, the Caesar of the Armenian Wars.

§ 8. Parthian Homage and Peace

It was not until the year A.D. 65 that Tiridates set out on his travels to Rome. He was accompanied by a magnificent retinue, Parthian and Roman cavalry, and princes and nobles of Parthia. The journey was one by land all the way, though his religious fear of defiling the sea is, without pro-

[1] Nero, ap. Dio., lxiii. 5. [2] See note at end.

bability, ascribed as the prince's motive for this. At least he crossed the Adriatic on his return. Tiridates rode on horseback to the Northern frontier of Italy, his wife riding by his side. There a chariot sent by Nero met them, and conveyed them down the Eastern coast through Picenum, and over the mountains to Naples. Here, his nine months' travels ended, he was ushered into the Emperor's presence, refusing to be deprived of his scimitar, but allowing it to be nailed to the scabbard, and, sinking on his knee, saluted Nero with reverence as his "Master." Nero and his freedman, Patrobius, entertained him richly with feasts, and with shows in the little amphitheatre of Puteoli, and the royal guest graciously showed his own skill in archery, shooting wild beasts from his seat, and piercing, it was said, two bulls with one and the same shaft. Thence Nero and Tiridates journeyed to Rome. The city welcomed them with enthusiasm. Festoons and garlands decorated the streets. The very house-tops were crowded with sight-seers in festal array. Troops with brightly burnished arms and gleaming standards lined the route, when the Armenian king entered for his Coronation by the Roman Emperor, and illuminations blazed in the streets at night. Next day the solemn ceremony was performed in the Forum. Nero, attended by the Senate and his bodyguard, ascended the rostrum, clad in triumphal garb, and took his seat in the curule chair of State, which was surrounded by military standards. Only Corbulo was wanting to render the scene complete. Tiridates approached, escorted by his retinue through two long lines of Roman troops drawn up on either side. Standing before Nero, he again hailed the Emperor as his Master, his Fortune, his Destiny, his very God, himself his very slave. Amid thunders of applause he ascended the platform and knelt before Nero, who raised him from his suppliant posture and embraced him. Then the Emperor, removing the tiara from the Parthian's head, solemnly placed the crown upon it, while a Senator proclaimed to the crowd the prince's words of homage. From the Forum the imperial procession moved to Pompeius' huge theatre, hard by the modern Gésu Church, which could hold forty thousand persons. Stage and auditorium were gilded over, and the display of gold won for that day the name of the "Golden day" in Roman annals. Purple canopies stretched over the theatre, on which was embroidered the subject of Nero driving a chariot in the

MODERN PUTEOLI (POZZUOLI)

hide the very fact of compromise from the mob in Rome, and the Golden Day achieved this purpose as no lesser display could have done. And in the second place, Tiridates returned home for his own part very suitably impressed. There was at last a real hope of concord and amity between the two great rival Empires, a concord and an amity to which they had been strangers for a hundred years. A real friendship was cemented between the Roman and the Parthian, and it was the more certain to last as the Armenian question was settled. Tiridates rebuilt Artaxata and named it Neroneia in token of his friendship for the Roman Emperor. In no portion of his own dominions was Nero's overthrow resented as it was in Parthia. When the news of his death reached Vologeses he at once sent envoys to the Senate praying that Nero's memory might be kept alive with all honour. And it was in Parthia that a pretender to the Empire who assumed the dead prince's name found many years later harbourage and support.[1]

And this was no mere personal friendship only. Nero's policy lived after him. For no less than fifty years peace between the two great Empires lasted unbroken. Armenia was quiet. Neither Roman nor Parthian harassed the other. The contrast to the fifty or the hundred years preceding Nero's reign was indeed a striking one. The strategical frontier and military situation on the upper Euphrates and on the Black Sea are greatly improved by the Romans in the few years following, by the incorporation of Pontus and lesser Armenia into the direct government of the Empire under Nero,[2] by the similar incorporation of Commagene, and the establishment of great legionary camps at Melitene, Satala, and Samosata under the Flavian Emperors. All this very useful work was done quietly, without alarm from Armenia or Parthia. Corbulo's campaigns had clearly demonstrated the insufficiency of the Augustan system of defence, and Nero's ultimate solution of the Armenian question had called imperatively for its improvements on these lines, an improvement begun by Nero himself, carried on by Vespasian and Domitian, and completed at last by Trajan when he finally constituted Cappadocia an independent military command of the first rank. This great work could be effected easily and quietly because of the fifty years' peace between Rome and Parthia. That peace was due to Nero and to

[1] See below, Chap. XI. sect. 8.

[2] See below, Chap. VI. sect. 6.

Nero only. When at length it was broken, it was the Parthian disregard of the Neronian settlement which caused the rupture, and Trajan's splended retaliation followed quickly. Then the last policy of Annexation, with all its consequences, was adopted victoriously. But busied with all his other military engagements, Nero had as wisely rejected that policy, though not without experiment, as he had tried the Augustan and found that also wanting. The splendour of the scene in the Roman Forum was no insane parade of over-weening pride, but the well-devised consummation of a long-planned, skilfully-devised policy, which itself, carried to a victorious conclusion, and answering all expectations, is the chief diplomatic and military triumph of the Principate of Nero.[1]

[1] See note at end.

CHAPTER VI

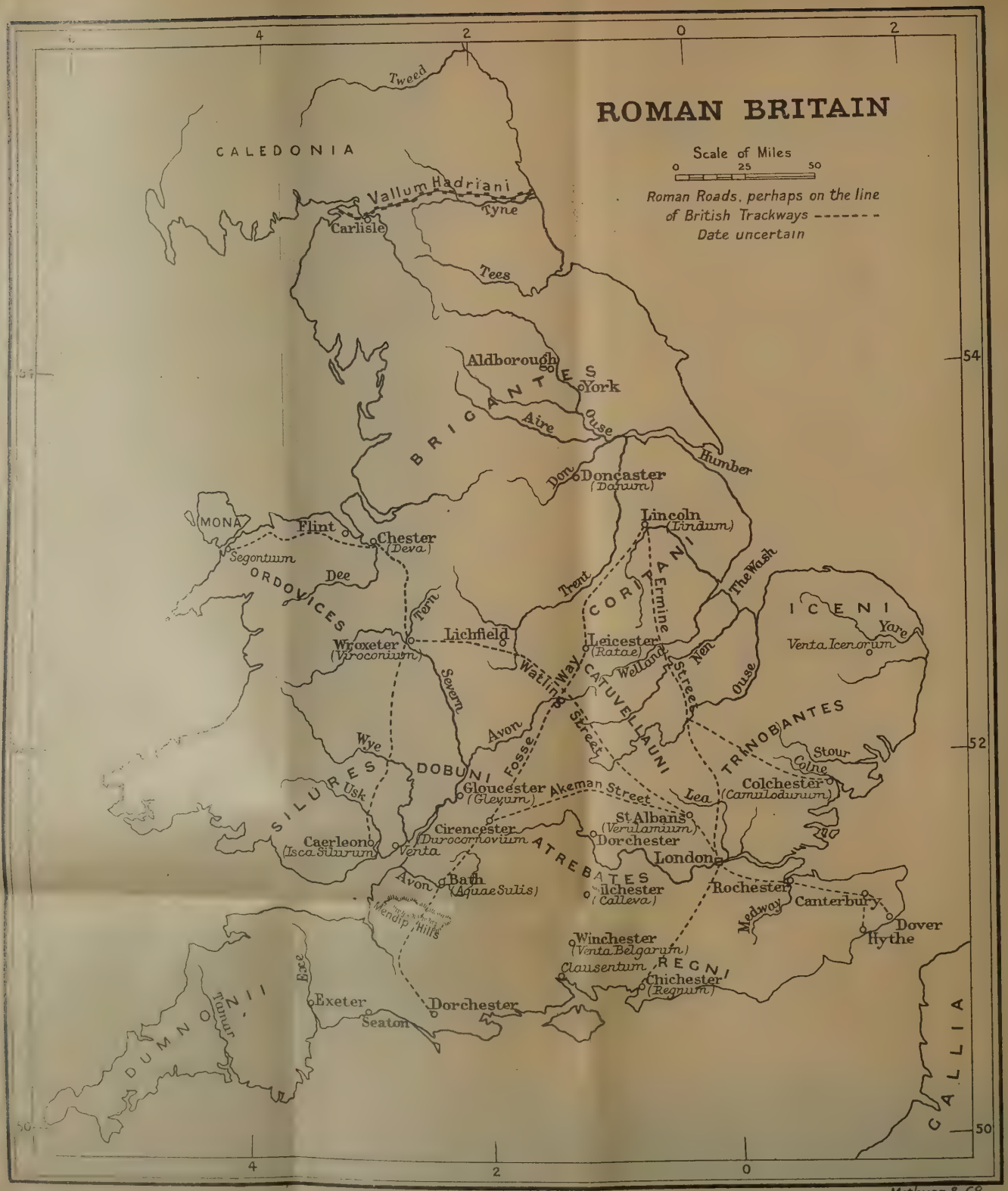
From Britain to the Caucasus, A.D. 54-68

§ 1. The Conquest of Britain.
§ 2. Nero's First Governors of Britain.
§ 3. The Great Rebellion, A.D. 60.
§ 4. Peace in Britain.
§ 5. Germany.
§ 6. The Danube and the Black Sea.

"Great the slaughter is
Here made by the Roman; great the answer be
Britons must take."

"Set we forward: let
A Roman and a British ensign wave
Friendly together."

(Shakespeare, *Cymbeline.*)


ROMAN BRITAIN
Scale of Miles
0 25 50
Roman Roads, perhaps on the line of British Trackways
Date uncertain
CALEDONIA
Tweed
Vallum Hadriani
Tyne
Carlisle
Tees
Aldborough
York
BRIGANTES
Aire
Ouse
Humber
Don
Doncaster (Danum)
Lincoln (Lindum)
MONA
Flint
Chester (Deva)
Segontium
Dee
ORDOVICES
Tern
Trent
CORITANI
Ermine
The Wash
ICENI
Yare
Venta Icenorum
Wroxeter (Viroconium)
Lichfield
Leicester (Ratae)
Welland
Nen
Ouse
Watling Way
Severn
CATUVELLAUNI
Street
TRINOBANTES
Avon
Fosse
Wye
DOBUNI
Stour
Colne
Colchester (Camulodunum)
SILURES
Usk
Gloucester (Glevum)
Akeman Street
Lea
St Albans (Verulamium)
Cirencester (Durocornovium)
Caerleon (Isca Silurum)
Venta
Dorchester
ATREBATES
London
Avon
Bath (Aquae Sulis)
Silchester (Calleva)
Rochester
Canterbury
Medway
Dover
Hythe
Mendip Hills
Winchester (Venta Belgarum)
Clausentum
REGNI
Chichester (Regnum)
Exe
Exeter
Seaton
Dorchester
Tamar
DUMNONII
GALLIA
54
52
50
4
2
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Methuen & Co

CHAPTER VI

§ 1. The Conquest of Britain

MORE than a hundred years before Nero's succession to the Principate Julius Caesar, his ancestor, had landed on the shores of Kent in the distant unknown island of Britain, the first of the conquering Romans. Caesar's great task, the conquest of Gaul, was incomplete so long as the savage islanders had still no dread of the Roman name, or the refugees from his power could flee outside his reach beyond the water, and the sullen Druid priests of Gaul could look to the cult of their barbarous fanaticism practised unchecked among the oak groves of Anglesey. But two expeditions proved to Caesar that the actual conquest of the island would be a task of a magnitude too great for one whose curiosity was satisfied, and whose chief tasks and chief interests lay elsewhere nearer home. It was better for the time to cultivate friendly relations with the more civilised principalities in the south-east of the island. And his successors followed Caesar's later rather than his earlier example. From the year of his withdrawal from Britain, in B.C. 54, to the year A.D. 43, no Roman army landed on its shores. Only the seed of the idea of conquest was planted, to germinate slowly, and to blossom into flower more quickly in the brains of poets than in the deeds of fact. An ever increasing volume of trade passed the straits and paid its tolls at the Gallic entrance to the Empire. Gaul was so pacified that the example of free Britain could no longer incite it by example to revolt. The British princes, eternally, like all free Celts, using their freedom to fight one another, supplied the Roman Emperor with fugitive pretenders enough wherewith to threaten any island princeling who showed any disposition to be troublesome, and to parade before the eyes of the Roman mob as proofs positive of Britain's submission to the Empire. There was full employment for the legions elsewhere, even after the Romans had finally withdrawn behind

the Rhine as their German frontier. Thus it befel that Augustus recommended, and Tiberius followed, a strict policy of non-interference, while even Caligula's projected British expedition was never seriously designed as such. It was reserved for Claudius, the unwisely-mocked, to first follow the way whither Caesar's example had pointed. He was induced partly by the unrest in Gaul which Caligula's exactions had provoked, but chiefly by the affairs of the island itself. For long years past a great British kingdom, under the patronage of Rome, had been absorbing the smaller chiefs in the south-east, and the British King Cunobelinus, from his capital city Camulodunum, the town of "Camulus," the Celtic Mars (which is undoubtedly the modern Colchester), had extended his sway over Essex, Middlesex, Hertfordshire, and parts at least of some eight neighbouring counties. "Cymbeline's" subjects were no uncivilised savages besmirched with woad and of Caliban-like visage. Roman civilisation and Roman divinities had long since been filtering into his kingdom from the other side of the channel. Through a reign of forty years he preserved friendly relations with the Romans; and even some humbler Imogen may have wedded Roman Posthumus. But Cunobelinus died between the years 41 and 43. His sons, Togodumnus and Caratacus, inherited their father's power. But the occasion given for interference coincided with Claudius' desire. The Emperor stopped all aggressive movements on the German frontier, to use his legions for the conquest of the island. For the task once taken up anew must now be carried to completion.

In A.D. 43 the Roman army of invasion landed on the Kentish coast. The hardiest of its fifty thousand men were the troops of the four legions whose names are inseparably linked with the Roman conquest of the island. These were the Second (Augusta), under Vespasian as legate; the Ninth (Hispana); the Fourteenth (Gemina), which was to gain by its valorous services in the land on whose shores it had just disembarked the honourable title of Britain's conquerors; and the Twentieth (Valeria Victrix), to whose soldiers, in after years, Chester was to extend hospitality for centuries together. Chief of the expedition was Aulus Plautius, and a brilliant staff accompanied him. In every respect the expedition was worthy of its great task, the addition of a new province in the far north-west to the Roman Empire. It was a war of conquest pure and simple, the overwhelming by a

superior race anxious for new territory of all the aspirations for independence possessed by an inferior race. Had peace societies ever flourished in the unfriendly soil of Rome, sorely must they have lamented that war which crushed those native liberties, and proved in final issue of benefit incalculable to the conquered race and its homeland.

Plautius' campaign was short and decisive. He forced the passage of the Medway, crossed, after stubborn fighting, the marshes and lagoons of the Thames in presence of Claudius himself, and, finally defeating the foe, seized Camulodunum. Claudius had gained a new province for the Empire. "He received," so ran the inscription on his Arch of Triumph at Rome, "the submission of eleven British kings, conquered without loss, and was the first to bring the barbarian tribes on the other side of Ocean under the sway of the Roman people." Yet little more than a footing had been gained in Britain. The Romans had to force their way step by step westwards to the Atlantic, northwards to the Solway and the Tyne. Much fighting awaited them, and not a few reverses. One great blaze of insurrection threatened, in Nero's reign, to consume all the hard won spoil, and make holocaust of scattered Roman troops and all the fabric of Roman rule together. Nero is said to have thought once of abandoning the whole emprise. If this could be true, the thought was but the weary and the passing desire of one who finds that he must, by still much toil and relentless labour and without counting the cost in lives, consolidate possessions too rapidly acquired and secure frontiers too hastily advanced. In fact, he and his generals, true to their Roman name, did not flinch in face of peril, defeat, and disaster. Rome never relaxed her grip. The enemy's impetuosity broke itself in vain upon the stubborn will that never turned back, that halted but to move forward. The Roman Imperial spirit in Emperor, whether pedant or artist, and in legionary, was unconquered and unconquerable.[1]

For a few years the Roman advance went on rapidly and successfully. All Cunobelinus' old kingdom quickly owned the Roman sway. Vespasian extended it by a series of victories to the Isle of Wight. The Second Legion was soon pushed forward to camp at Glevum (Gloucester), and the Ninth probably to Ratae (Leicester). The Fourteenth and Twentieth lay behind in camp at Durocornovium (Cirencester). Plautius

[1] See note at end.

returned to Rome in 47 to receive the merited honours which awaited him, and was succeeded in Britain by P. Ostorius Scapula. With tireless energy Ostorius pushed the legions forward. The Ninth found itself by A.D. 49 at Lindum (Lincoln), the Fourteenth and Twentieth on the Severn at Viroconium (Wroxeter). Only the Second remained stationary at Gloucester, for it was impossible to move north and west at one and the same time. But, the north so far secured, Ostorius penetrated into Wales, where the Silures in the south and the Ordovices in the north proved fierce and difficult savages. But the Second Legion was pushed on to camp on the Usk at Isca (Caerleon), in the Silures' country, and small garrisons at Caerwent (Venta Silurum), Gloucester, and Cirencester secured its communications.[1]

Meanwhile in A.D. 51 was established at Camulodunum the first Roman colony in Britain. The colonist was the veteran legionary who had completed his twenty years of service, and every colonist was liable to military duty in case of emergency. This might be the more necessary, however quiet and peaceful the east of Britain might now seem, the farther away the legions themselves disappeared into the wild forests of the north and west. The new "Colonia Victrix" became the centre of Roman administration of the island. Here, therefore, there was at once introduced that "Caesar-worship," the device of Augustus' consummate statesmanship, the great political instrument of Imperial unity and test and emblem of political loyalty, and not a device conceived in any spirit of religious proselytism. At Camulodunum a temple was erected to Emperor and Goddess together, whether named Rome or Venus or Victory made no difference to the political conception of that Empire to which thereby all its members, from the sands of Syria to the rocks of the Cornish coast, should profess their visible allegiance.

One great omission, however, marked the founding of the colony. It was not fortified. Forgetful of the chances of the future, the veteran, in careless thoughtlessness, rejoiced in the sunny calm of the present and the smiling prosperity of the quiet Essex meadows, and found surety of prosperity where all in very truth was perilous. He and his officers never bethought themselves that the victory had been too easily and too quickly won, that fanaticism would see in the new temple not only the "citadel of unending domination,"

[1] See note at end.

but also the invader's declaration of war against the tribal religion; that patriotism might still resent the sight of the new town, the abode of the alien governor, the very "seat of slavery"; that greed and cupidity might covet the Roman wealth, savage hatred plot the massacre of the foreigner, man, woman, and child alike. A scanty Roman garrison, its only fort the new-built temple walls, should within ten years discover that their house was verily built upon the sand.

Ostorius himself had little time for oversight of the new colony. His fighting in Wales was incessant. Caratacus, the dispossessed and fugitive British prince, was defeated, delivered up to him, and sent prisoner to Rome to supply the pens of Roman rhetoricians with a new theme for mock heroics. Yet the fighting among the Welsh mountains still continued, and Ostorius died, worn out by his labours. He had greatly advanced the Roman arms, and deserved well of his Emperor and countrymen. To him succeeded A. Didius Gallus, in A.D. 52, who had already served under Plautius as general of the cavalry in the invasion of Britain. The efforts of the new governor saved the hard-pressed Second Legion at Isca from its harassing adversaries, and that camp was maintained in face of the still turbulent Silures. Didius Gallus was still governor when Nero succeeded Claudius in October, A.D. 54.[1]

§ 2. Nero's First Governors of Britain

At the end of A.D. 54 the frontier of the Roman province in Britain ran from Caerleon, camp of the Second Legion, to Wroxeter, where the Fourteenth and Twentieth Legions lay in camp together, waiting until peace in South Wales should set them free from that post of observation and allow a forward movement, and then continued from Wroxeter to the headquarters of the Ninth Legion at Lincoln. Within that frontier there existed two semi-independent client kingdoms, that of the peaceful Regni in W. Sussex and E. Hampshire, under the faithful Prince Cogidubnus, and the more powerful and suspicious tribe of the Iceni in Norfolk and Suffolk. These were governed by King Prasutagus, whose wife was Boudicca ("Boadicea"), the heroine of the poet's Britain.[1] Over the frontier lay the Silures in South

[1] See note at end.

Wales, chafing still; the Ordovices guarding the Druids' last asylum in the island of Mona, the modern Anglesey; and the powerful Brigantes in Yorkshire, whose Queen Cartimandua and her soldier husband Venutius were friendly to the Romans. In the S.E. of the Island lay the new unfortified colony of Camulodunum, seat of the Imperial administration. Behind it, on the Thames, was Londinium, now fast rising into note as the chief commercial centre of the province. The Colne could not rival the Thames, and merchants, Roman, Gallic, and British, thronged the town's ways in ever-growing numbers. This was the great port of entrance into the island, the seat of custom, the Zollamt, and residence of the Imperial procurator, who was finance minister of the provincial staff, and was charged with complete supervision of the revenues of the new won territory. Roman capital poured into the island. Roman camps were distributed along the frontiers. Roman towns were springing up within them. Such were the beginnings of Silchester (Calleva) and Winchester, Cirencester and Bath, Canterbury and Gloucester. Verulamium, hard by the modern St. Alban's in Hertfordshire, even received a charter of incorporation and a municipal organisation, so quickly Romanised was the district becoming. Roman legionaries were mining in the distant Mendip Hills in Somersetshire, and perhaps entrenched in view of the great lonely Devonshire rampart of Dartmoor. The army of occupation had not been diminished. It must still have numbered some fifty thousand men. But the more fertile and thickly-inhabited districts saw but little of the Roman soldier. Here in Britain, as a century earlier in Gaul and more recently on the Danube, nothing in the history of Roman conquest is more striking than its celerity. The genius of the greatest Roman general seems stamped for all time upon the Roman armies of the West. Annexation preceded subjugation.[1] In eleven years from the first landing in Kent, the legionary was fighting beyond the Usk, among the mountains of North Wales, in the valley of the Trent. Within those distant bounds peace prevailed and happy prosperity. Clouds hung upon the horizon, but the Roman advance was as steadily pursued in the early years of Nero's Principate as under his predecessor.[2]

Nero left Didius Gallus undisturbed in his governorship. The temporary pacification of the Silures allowed him again

[1] *Cf.* Haverfield, *Arch. Journ.*, xlix. p. 223. [2] See note at end.

to turn his attention to the north, where domestic disturbances, arising among the Brigantes, claimed his most anxious scrutiny. Queen Cartimandua of that tribe, relying on the favour which she had purchased from the Romans by her surrender to them of the vanquished Caratacus, thought the time come to dispense with the services of Venutius, alike as husband and therefore as prince-consort. Venutius most unreasonably objected to his supplanting by his own squire Vellocatus, and availed himself of his military reputation among his tribesmen to declare war upon the Queen for her caprice and infidelity. In the fighting which followed Queen Cartimandua was worsted, although the Roman governor sent to her help not only some auxiliary cohorts, but the Ninth Legion itself under Caesius Nasica. The legion managed with difficulty to rescue the person of the Queen, but Venutius remained master of the country north of the Roman frontier.

The Brigantes being excitedly engaged among themselves, Didius seized the occasion, the West being also quiet, to advance the headquarters of the Fourteenth and Twentieth Legions from Viroconium to Deva, from Wroxeter to Chester, though a garrison was probably left behind in Wroxeter, the town being an important station on Watling Street. But henceforward Deva or Chester is the most important Roman camp in Britain, and the Twentieth Legion make it their abiding home up to the day when Honorius recalled every Roman soldier from the abandoned island. From the first Deva was constituted as a double camp for two legions, as the task of its garrison was a double one, namely, the defence of the marches against Welsh marauders, and of the coast against Irish pirates. Curiously it befel that Chester remained always a camp. It never acquired a municipal charter and status by the accretion of a civil population round the military lines. Why its history in this respect should have differed from that of Lincoln and York in the same province, and from that of other army centres in neighbouring provinces, it seems impossible to-day to discover.[1]

Didius Gallus had advanced the limits of the Roman province to lines which it never exceeded under Nero's Principate. It was not until A.D. 72 that Q. Petilius Cerialis marched against the Brigantes and removed the headquarters of the Ninth Legion from Lincoln to York, called Eburacum.

[1] See note at end.

In the last year of Didius' legateship, A.D. 57, the frontier formed two sides of a great square, with the Second Legion at Isca, the Ninth at Lindum, the Fourteenth and Twentieth at the apex in their new camp at Deva. The auxiliary troops were more scattered.

Didius' successor, Q. Veranius, looked again with longing at the defiant Silures. But he died within a year, lamenting that fate thus denied to him the two years which alone in his opinion were necessary for the complete subjugation of the entire island. It was a shortsighted and an attractive view, how shortsighted, and equally how attractive, was shown immediately by the fate which befel the new governor, who accepted that view implicitly. This governor was the most famous of all governors of Britain before Agricola, a man represented by the Roman historian as equal even to Corbulo in military skill, and deemed by popular rumour his rival. C. Suetonius Paulinus succeeded Veranius in A.D. 59. Seventeen years before, he had acquired renown in a Moorish war. In the three exciting and perilous years during which he governed Britain, he imperilled that renown by over-confidence, but redeemed it, and with it a province well-nigh lost to the Empire, by his valour and the valour of his troops.

§ 3. The Great Rebellion

To Suetonius on arrival, as to Veranius, the only question was one as to the speed of the conquest remaining to be achieved. The rest of the island was quiet. He therefore resolved, operating from Deva as a base, to pursue after and to annihilate Druidism in its last stronghold in Mona. The Emperors Tiberius and Claudius had set themselves to extirpate it in Gaul. But the priests still retained their power and celebrated their gory rites in Wales.[1]

So able were Suetonius' dispositions that the early summer of the year A.D. 60 found him encamped, with his two legions from Deva, on the mainland side of the Menai straits opposite Anglesey. Confronting him on the other shore were the last remnants of Druidism and the refugees from Roman pursuit. From his camp, pitched, perhaps, at Caer Seiont, where later the Romans built the fort Segontium, the Roman general reconnoitred the opposite shore and the hostile crowd, and issued his orders that the passage was to be forced. The

[1] See note at end.

horse were to swim the ford, the infantry to cross in flat-bottomed boats. At the water's edge a motley and tumultuous multitude howled defiance with fierce gestures and brandished arms. Amid the close serried ranks of native warriors, women, the very furies of the sacred island, clad in sombre garments, and with dishevelled hair loosely flowing, waved their glaring torches, and joined the Druid priests in dire imprecations, with hands uplifted to heaven, upon the foe. For a moment even the soldiers of Rome, aghast at the unwonted spectacle, wavered and held back, while the darts fell thick upon them. But their officers cheered them gaily forward, and themselves, with quick shame at their own affright, each crying to his comrade not to fear a fanatical rout of women and of priests, flung themselves fiercely upon the hostile lines and trampled them to earth among their own extinguished firebrands. Amid the oak groves the altars of those savage rites, whereon the foe had called upon their gods in vain, were yet reeking with their victims' blood and smoking with human entrails, when the victorious Romans cut their way through to them. Already the Roman axe had destroyed the polluted groves, already the walls of a Roman fort had risen upon the conquered island, when tidings reached the Roman general which called him in hot haste with every man whom he could muster back to Chester. The conquest of Mona was delayed yet eighteen years.

No conquest of a semi-barbarous country is likely to be complete without a rising of the half-subjugate natives against the conquerors, with or even without suitable opportunity. This is a familiar truth enough to us English, and the Romans had learnt it in Spain, in Gaul, in Africa, long before they came to Britain. The more rapid has been the success of the first invasion, the more speedy is likely to be the coming of the rebellion. There is hardly a native tribe which will not fling itself in one last effort upon its masters. Yet the great rebellion in Britain in the year A.D. 60 took the Roman governor unawares. And yet, apart from general probability, there had long since existed particular grievances fomenting discontent.

It was in the east and south-east, that is in the most civilised parts of the island, that that discontent was most bitter. Everything combined to bring it to a head in this year. From the very first the veterans of Camulodunum had borne themselves wilfully and despitefully towards the natives.

They had evicted them at pleasure from their lands and homes. They had maltreated them as prisoners and as slaves, inciting them thereby to secret conspiracy and deep-nourished hopes of a vengeance to come. This example of license and plunder was quickly imitated by the troops elsewhere. Nor did the officials restrain them. The procurator and the legate were to the angry Britons as two kings, the one over their goods, the other over their most unhappy persons. The Roman tribute in itself was no small grievance, and in particular to semi-civilised tribes, as these prefer the erratic and irregular exactions of an irresponsible tribal chieftain to the regular demand for tribute, the very anticipation of which recurrent evil is a burden, even though the tribute may be but half the sum actually demanded under the ruder system. But in Britain the Imperial procurator, Catus Decianus, was greedy and harsh, even with effrontery reclaiming gifts which Claudius had bestowed on native chieftains. In the train of the Roman legionary had come the Roman usurer. Just as in past days in afflicted Cyprus the Roman Republican noble had by his scoundrel middlemen, himself the greater criminal, extorted money from his hapless debtors at cost of their lives, while he for his part prated of liberty in the forum, so now still there were politicians who could imitate the noble Brutus at least in part. Seneca's great wealth had other origin besides Imperial generosity. His capital was out at usury in Britain to the amount, said some, of forty million sesterces.[1] His Stoic philosophy did not forbid it. And now he was in A.D. 60 calling in his capital and exacting his interest with rigorous severity. Perhaps he, wiser than Suetonius, had detected signs of unrest. There seems no other motive for his action in that year. Under the grievances of loss of liberty and an alien rule, of greed, extortion, eviction, debt, the province fretted ominously. The Romans were scattered and insolently over-confident. Their towns were undefended. The booty would be very great. Only an occasion, a leader, a battle-cry, were needed. It is the old story which the invader, be he Roman, Norman, English, so hardly learns and always forgets, that the peace in an alien land which follows victory is no peace but a preparation for war, unless the conqueror learns not only to show mercy, but also to distrust and to hide his distrust withal. Happy is he otherwise, if it is only on himself that the vengeance falls, not on

[1] *Cf. supra*, page 109.

the helpless women and children, when he is lured to distant enterprise or lulled in vain self-confidence.

Justice and fair treatment might have delayed, or at least have mitigated, the misfortunes of the Romans in Britain. Injustice and oppression kindled the devouring fire. Shortly before A.D. 60 King Prasutagus of the Iceni died. In his long reign he had amassed much wealth, and, having no son to succeed to him, and anticipating the probable fate of his kingdom, he bequeathed to the Roman Emperor the inheritance of his sovereignty, and made him co-heir with his own two daughters of his riches. Thereby he had hoped to secure to his wife Boudicca and his daughters the safety of their persons, and possession of part at least of his goods. In this hope he had been grievously mistaken. His kingdom and his house alike were treated as the spoils of war. Centurions governed the kingdom. Slaves lorded it in the house. The Queen was scourged: her daughters were outraged. Spoliation soon spread beyond the bounds of the royal domains. The chief nobles of the tribe were robbed of their ancestral estates. The kinsmen of the dead king were thrown into chains. Evidently, argued the tribe (and with great significance as regards the probability of a general rebellion), they had become part of the Roman province. The insulted majesty of the Queen demanded vengeance. At Boudicca's urging her people sprang to arms. The flame of revolt thus kindled among the Iceni spread at once to their neighbours the Trinobantes of Essex, to whom Camulodunum offered so rich, so easy, and so unsuspecting a prey.

No time could have been better chosen. The governor had not been seen for many a long day past. He was far away, fighting in the far north-west. The nearest troops of any account were the solitary Ninth Legion at Lindum. Camulodunum had its garrison of veterans, past service, detested for their cruelty, and no walls. London and Verulam had neither walls nor indeed garrison, save such sorry troops as "the accursed one," the procurator Catus, could scrape together in the former city. Now while hearts were hot and wrongs were fresh and Suetonius was far away, now was the time for striking. Queen Boudicca harangued her tribe. Her figure was majestic, her stature tall, her glance fiery, her deep voice recounted wrongs well nigh unutterable. Down over her shoulders to beneath her waist there floated free a profusion of rich auburn hair. With great torc of gold, clad

in rich embroidered tunic, and thick cloak fastened over it, she appealed to her countrymen and urged them on to rapine and revenge. Iceni, Trinobantes, Brigantes, the tribes to the number of a hundred and twenty thousand men, swept down upon the defenceless Roman settlers as Indians upon New England homesteads, as cruel and as relentless.

Many were the red omens of the on-coming terror in the colony, as men narrated them later in superstitious awe. Victory's statue fell backward from its pedestal, as shrinking from an advancing foe. The sound of barbarian shouting, mingled with a wild great laughter, rang through their empty senate house at night. The whoops of savagery and war re-echoed in the deserted theatre. Ocean's waves were tinged with blood as they rolled sullenly in upon the Essex shore, and weird shapes in the fashion of human forms were left lonely upon it by the retreating tide. Panic gripped the city. Women mad with terror ran shrieking through the streets, bewailing the doom to come. Little could be done to save or defend the town. They had just time to send to Catus at Londinium imploring help. He sent them two hundred men, and poorly armed. The rest he must keep for London's and his own defence. The two hundred and the garrison of colonists, these were to stem the rush of the advancing horde of maddened savages. There were traitors within the city, working with secret plot to discover and reveal, to baffle and confuse, all their plans. The citizens made neither rampart of earth nor hastily dug-out ditch. The Temple of the Imperial Gods must serve them as their only fort. The old men and the women were not sent away to safety. There was nowhither to flee, no harbourage from slaughter. We English, too, have had to face the doom in India, which fell out of a sunny heaven upon amazed Camulodunum, and we too may know how the Romans died. They waited the on-coming tide of fury with the courage not only of despair, but of grim Roman tenacity and discipline. It broke raging upon the unfortified city. For two heroic days it surged baffled round the Temple walls, while the flames leapt and roared from the buildings surrounding it. Then on the third day it burst the last barrier. Hell was let loose upon the city and all within it. The men died fighting; the women, tortured by the malice of fiends, mutilated, impaled, perished in a lingering agony of suffering, amidst the mad revelry and wild orgies of the savages. And who may tell of their sacri-

fices to their demon-gods in the groves? Then the hordes swept on to glut them with fresh blood. Night and silence fell upon the site of the lost town, the burnt ashes of the first Roman colony in Britain.

On the Roman side there was little concerted action, and indeed little time to devise any. Petilius Cerialis, commander of the Ninth Legion, when the news of the rising reached him at Lincoln, did all that a brave man could to stay disaster. He hurried south by Ermine Street with his little army. It was a "rash" act indeed, yet the Roman must needs dare it. His force was at once sucked up in the ocean of savagery, his infantry cut to pieces.[1] He himself alone with a handful of horse escaped to find shelter behind the entrenchments of his camp. One fourth of the legions in Britain was annihilated at one blow. His advance may have given London a respite. But unless succour could come, and that quickly, London too was lost. Catus, the procurator, took ship and fled to Gaul. He has done his work, and, contemptible, passes from our sight. Only Suetonius was left. If there were any hope of salvation yet for the province, it must be in him and in his troops. And now he too played the man. His army could not at the best be a large one, and compared to the enemy's flushed and exultant hordes, it was a small force indeed. Yet it was a Roman army. Chester must be his base of operations, and part of the Twentieth Legion must be left to guard it. For if he failed to conquer, his communications with Gaul must needs be cut, and then only the fort at Chester could defend the remnants of his army. The legion at Lincoln must join him as speedily as possible, and he must go to meet it. He did not know that it was cut to pieces. And there was the Second at Isca. That must march at once to reach him by the Wroxeter Road. Meanwhile, he himself with the Fourteenth and part of the Twentieth would march straight down Watling Street, pick up perhaps the Second at Wroxeter, the Ninth where it could join him. He must collect all his troops to save Verulam and London, and defeat the enemy. Urgent orders were at once despatched to Isca, and meanwhile all the neighbouring garrisons were called into the base camp at Chester.

The Second Legion never came at all. By the direst of chances its commander was not in camp when Suetonius' summons arrived. He had left a subordinate, one Poenius

[1] See note at end.

Postumus, in command, and probably with but a part of the garrison. Rarely perhaps has so cruel a choice been presented to a soldier as that which then was Postumus', and presented to him for instant decision. The Governor, quite ignorant of his circumstances, required an evacuation of the camp which his commanding officer had given to him to guard against the ever-watchful Silures, and on that camp that officer's safety and that of the troops with him must depend. Postumus refused to obey Suetonius' summons. That fear prompted him or despair we cannot believe. Doubtless he acted wrongly, and is to be condemned, not on grounds of military discipline only. The failure of the Second Legion, or even part of it, to arrive at Wroxeter added in no small measure to Suetonius' grave peril. Not even Isca was worth the risk, neither was it for Postumus to weigh the chances. Yet he staked his regiment's credit, his reputation, and his life, on a wrong cast. And when, as soon as all was over, he slew himself in despair, he dies subject rather of pity than of indignant fury at his insubordination.[1]

Suetonius' army was thus reduced to a bare ten thousand men—*i.e.*, the full available strength of the Fourteenth Legion, which, as it had just come back from the war in Anglesey, may be counted at five thousand at the most, a detachment, some two thousand strong perhaps, of the Twentieth, and the remainder auxiliaries. With this force he marched down Watling Street for London, leaving the rest of the Twentieth to guard the camp at Chester. Through a country swarming with foes he pushed stubbornly on, and reached his goal before the arrival of Boudicca's army.[1]

But here at London the worst of news awaited him. His march to the city had almost certainly been planned in the hope partly of picking up Cerialis and the Ninth Legion on the way, if not actually at the town, partly of concerting future movements with the procurator Catus, and using such troops as he had collected. With these added all to his army and the Second Legion as well, he might venture to offer battle even to the masses of the enemy. But the Second had for some unexplained reason failed him. And at London he heard of the annihilation of the Ninth, and the flight of Catus. His position was now most precarious. And now too he learnt fully the strength and savagery of the Britons, who had destroyed with ease an entire legion, sacked the chief Roman

[1] See note at end.

city in the country, and were fast approaching. Suetonius decided at once on a retreat, melancholy though its cost must be. London, and Verulam, all Roman lives in South East Britain of those who could not accompany his retreat, and finally his communications with Gaul and the Roman Empire, all must be sacrificed. Yet he had no better choice. He had not troops enough to defend London. If he fell back on Chester, he might still pick up the missing legion, and unite all the forces still left to him together. Now that the Ninth was gone, this was his best remaining chance. The longer too the war was protracted, the livelier the prospect of dissensions and faint-heartedness in the hostile camp. The farther he enticed the foe away from the hearth of the rebellion in the eastern counties, the greater the numbers of possible deserters from their ranks. As his march on London had been justified by his hopes of joining forces with Cerialis and Catus, so his evacuation of the city was dictated by sheer military necessity, when, upon reaching it, he found that his hopes of reinforcements were vain, and the city could not be defended without them. To push on in the direction of the advancing foe was to idly rush into the jaws of the lion, and to court destruction, though sixty sea coasts and six hundred Roman Empires lay in that direction. To offer battle outside London with his present forces was an enormous risk, to be avoided if possible. Defeat must mean the massacre of every Roman in the country. It was the general's duty to collect all his forces before staking his all on this one last desperate venture. As governor of Britain, Suetonius had allowed a great rebellion to surprise him unawares. As general in the crisis, he did his best to atone for his blindness by quick decision and clear-sighted judgment in that most appalling of necessities ever imposed upon a general, the abandonment of defenceless towns to the cruelty of merciless barbarians.[1]

London was evacuated, despite the tears and entreaties of its inhabitants. Those who were strong enough Suetonius allowed to accompany the retreat. The rest, the women, the children, the aged, those who loved their homes too fondly, all fell victims to the Britons' butchery. A like fate with like attendant horrors befel Verulam, through which the Romans passed in their rapid retreat. The insurgents, neglecting any small forts whose garrisons had been unable to join the main Roman army, fell with glee upon the easier richer prey.

[1] See note at end.

Seventy thousand Romans and their allies are said to have been massacred in the sack of the three towns. "For it was not," says the Roman historian, "prisoners or slaves to traffic with that the Britons desired. Their thoughts were fixed on slaughter, on the torture of the stake, of the gibbet, of the cross. They were as men who should repay the doom, and hastening to snatch their vengeance first."

The Romans fell back along Watling Street, Boudicca and her host pressing upon their rear. The retreat, the temper and deeds of the enemy, might demoralise even the Roman legionary, and the column was further encumbered with the refugees. Yet never a hint of despair or any lack of discipline is preserved to us in the record. But now fortune dealt her final blow. The food supply ran short, nor could it be supplemented in that hostile land for so many. Perhaps Suetonius should never have admitted any non-combatants to the shelter of his army, the only shelter left them. Yet was it not enough to offer up the weak to certain death? In any case the end was come at last. Food was only to be won of victory. The retreat to Chester was impossible as well. The ten thousand must fight their fight alone. The Roman column halted. Before now in Roman history the soldier's valour and the general's tactical skill had redeemed the strategical mischances of a campaign.

It was somewhere on the line of Watling Street between St. Alban's and Wroxeter, probably nearer the latter, and perhaps not very far from Lichfield, that there was fought the last great battle for Roman rule in Britain. With ten thousand troops to face an over-whelming number of the enemy, Suetonius chose his defensive position with great care. His rear and flanks must be protected from any chance of surprise by the Britons. The site selected was admirable. In his rear was a wood. The flanks were protected by the sides of a defile, whose mouth where it opened out upon an open level plain was occupied by the Roman army. Wood and defile were searched carefully, lest any enemy should lurk in ambush there. Thus protected from everything but a frontal attack, and that upon a narrow front, Suetonius massed his men together in the defile's mouth in close order. There could be no open order and no manœuvring in this last battle. In the centre were the legionaries, on either wing the auxiliaries, also in close order with ranks closed up, and his cavalry were drawn up for shock tactics beyond them on the

extreme flanks. Thus posted, the Roman awaited with confidence the onset of the foe.

The pursuing Britons poured upon the plain and halted. They ranged their wagons in ancient Gallic fashion in a great semi-circle behind their host. On these stood the women to cheer them on to victory and to feast their eyes upon the slaughter of the enemy. Driving in her war-chariot down the ranks of the Britons might be seen the tall figure of the British Queen, inciting with fierce gestures her warriors on to vengeance and to plunder. One last effort, and surely that no great one, and Britain would be rid for ever of the accursed invader. With clamours and shoutings, eager to glut their lust for blood, the Britons rushed upon the enemy.[1]

But the little Roman force awaited them undismayed. Suetonius encouraged his men with a few brief soldierly words. They were veterans of the long British wars, these Romans, and they cheered him with enthusiasm and obeyed his orders to the letter. As the Britons moved upon them, narrowing their front as they closed in upon the mouth of the defile, and thickening rank on rank and warrior on warrior the nearer they drew, the Romans reserved their fire and waited patiently. Not until the mass of the foe came within near range, then, and not till then, a storm of pikes rained ceaselessly upon them, transfixing every one his man. Their missiles all discharged, the Romans rushed forward in one closely serried column upon the halting shattered masses of the savage army, cleaving their disorganised array upon the plain as with a wedge, and finishing the work with cold steel, while on the wings the cavalry charged fiercely, cutting, slaying, scattering the last resistance. And now that fatal wagon barricade proved the Britons' last ruin. Hurled back against it, they were hewn down without mercy. And who should spare the women, with the deeds at Camulodunum, at London, at Verulam, in his memory? The day of vengeance for the tortured and the murdered, the women and the children, was come at last, and none should stay the Roman hand from these brutes in human shape. On that field of Roman victory warrior and woman and beast of burden lay stark together in massed death. The requital was complete.

The Roman losses were not heavy. Some four hundred were killed, and doubtless many more were wounded. Eighty thousand of the Britons were said to have strewn the field of

[1] See note at end.

battle, and though this number of slain foes, like some of Caesar's or Lucullus' numbers, was made to please the Roman public, which could not estimate a victory save by mendacity's quantitative measurements, yet whatever the exaggeration their defeat was crushing. Suetonius' victory was never seriously challenged. Still, though Boudicca poisoned herself in her despair, the embers of revolt blazed up fitfully here and there, before the fire was quenched for good. But the Roman general had won the day. He had emerged triumphant from out as desperate a crisis as ever challenged military skill and tested the soldier's courage. The skill was not wanting. The courage rang true. Britain was saved, albeit hardly, to the Roman Empire.[1]

Neither, for all the glamour of patriotic art, may we justly lament for the conquered cause. "Boadicea's" statue may recall her memory on the banks of her river Thames, the memory of one who had suffered much at her Roman conqueror's hands, whose right to vengeance was manifest to the very Roman himself, who glutted her vengeance with the zest and ferocity of the savage. It were notwithstanding but maudlin sentiment to deplore the Roman victory. The revenge was one of other greater races than the Briton, of time rather than the avenging sword.

"Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle of silvery parapets!
Tho' the Roman eagle shadow thee, tho' the gathering enemy narrow thee,
Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle."

But the Roman conquest was Britain's first step along the path to her wider Empire.

§ 4. Peace in Britain

It was late autumn in the year A.D. 60 when Suetonius won his victory. To finish the war and stamp out the last traces of rebellion, Nero hurried out reinforcements, some eight cohorts of auxiliary foot, and a thousand horse, or five thousand men in all.[1] Suetonius kept his troops, despite the approach of winter, in the field. The sorely tried Ninth Legion was reconstituted, though still it fell short of its full strength. The Roman ravaged the unhappy land with fire and sword, but famine was the worst of its many distresses,

[1] See note at end.

and claimed yet more numerous victims. No crops had been sown during the year of revolt, and gaunt want stalked through the countryside. Catus' successor, the new procurator, Julius Classicianus, viewing the state of his province with the financier's eye, quarrelled deeply with the ruthless governor, and sent the gloomiest of reports home to Rome. The victor's severity kept many in arms who would else submit, and the financial agent wrote that he could anticipate no end to the fighting so long as Suetonius retained his command. It was not, however, characteristic of the Imperial Government under Nero to believe lightly tales to the discredit of its officials without enquiry. The Emperor therefore despatched a trusted servant of his own, the freedman Polyclitus, to reconcile governor and procurator together, if it might be. For their enmity could not but work evil to the sorely suffering province. Polyclitus was also to seek to induce the last rebels in the field to submit. He arrived in great state with a lordly retinue, and the army was duly if unwillingly impressed. So far as lay in his power he smoothed matters over in his report to Nero. But it was apparent that the restless and vindictive Suetonius was not the man to restore peace and tranquillity to the island. A loss of ships and sailors in a storm at sea supplied the first colourable pretext. In the spring of A.D. 61, he was recalled, and one of the consuls of the year, P. Petronius Turpilianus, resigning that office for the purpose, was sent out to supersede him.

No honours awaited Suetonius in Rome. He had indeed fought with gallantry, and had saved a "lost Britain" to the Empire; but how far were not his rashness and his carelessness responsible for the risk of its loss, his severity for Britain's sorry plight when he left its shores? In truth the next few years must be years of peace, if the province is to recover from the misery into which the rebellion and all its attendant woes have plunged it. A forward policy at this time would be mere midsummer madness. Despite the historian's sneer, a thoughtless sneer, it was a most honourable name which the new governor's "inactivity" deserved. His clemency and his cautious dealing during his two years of office banished the last traces of the former discontent from the province. "He dared no advance," are words meant with curious blindness to condemn, yet they are in reality Petronius' chief tribute of praise. If such were the temper of

the time in high circles in Rome which is thus reflected in the historian's page, Nero's choice was indeed a good one.

Petronius was succeeded in A.D. 63 by M. Trebellius Maximus, who continued his predecessor's policy, and governed Britain peacefully till the year following Nero's death. The island enjoyed a period of timely repose, wherein nothing suffered save the discipline of the troops, so unwontedly inactive, and the reputation of the governor on that account. The legions returned to their old headquarters, the Ninth to Lindum, the Second to Isca, the Fourteenth and Twentieth to Deva. The Fourteenth was the hero of the great war. It chiefly had won the desperate victory in A.D. 60, and rejoiced henceforward in the proud title of Martia Victrix, as did its legionaries in that of "Domitores Britanniæ." And it speaks well for the peace of the province that this, the most spirited and the most efficient of its four legions, could be withdrawn by Nero in A.D. 68 for other service [1] without effect on the Romans' security. The work of rebuilding was begun. Verulam, London, Camulodunum, rose anew from their ashes. But the colony never recovered its former pre-eminence among the Roman towns in Britain, and the circuit of its stout new walls, which its builders no longer neglected, was of less extent than that of Chester, Verulam, or Cirencester.[2] And after the year of the great disaster it is never mentioned in history.

Peace settled down upon the island for the rest of Nero's reign. Not until the early years of Vespasian's Principate is the advance begun once more, and Eburacum becomes the headquarters of the Ninth Legion by direction of its old brave but unhappy commander, Petilius Cerialis, now once more returned to Britain, but this time as Governor.

The history of our island under the Roman Emperors, Claudius, who conquered it, and Nero, who held fast to the conquest, is as that of some gallant adventurous prize, speeding swiftly under her victors' guidance into unknown far Western Seas; but after short voyaging under sunny skies the cyclone's sudden fury descends upon the ship, and all but overwhelms her. Out of it she reels slowly, her sails and rigging torn into shreds, her bulwarks rent away, her crew haggard and mourning the cruel loss of comrades drowned before their eyes. But the courage of the sailors has never failed her, and the helmsman holds fast by the wheel, until

[1] *Cf.* below, page 227. [2] See note at end.

calm succeeds to storm, and quiet to stormy seas, and she glides, fair once more and beautiful, into the haven of rest of the Roman Peace.

§ 5. Germany

The conquest of Britain of necessity prevented any forward movement on the German frontier, even if no other considerations had existed to hinder this. Britain to Claudius, Nero, and many of their successors, was far more important that Germany. Hence the Roman relations with the German tribes during the Principate of Nero deserve only brief notice. The Emperor makes no departure from the sage policy of his predecessors.

Ever since the disaster which befel Varus and his legions in the wild Teutoburg Forest, Augustus' selection of the Rhine instead of the Elbe frontier for his Empire had been approved. The wisdom of the policy is probable, but not here to be discussed. It is therefore with reason, if it is a little ludicrous, that the Bavarian Walhalla on the Danube to-day counts "Hermann" as first in the list of German patriots, although it is perhaps more ludicrous for the English writer to claim Arminius' victory, that of German barbarism over Roman civilisation, as one of the decisive battles of the world. But the result was that the tribes over the Rhine were for the most part left to themselves. If they failed to slaughter one another of their own motion, and this happened rarely, Roman diplomacy could usually provoke fresh disturbances. Thus while the savages were engrossed in their own internecine conflicts, the Roman provinces on the Rhine had peace.

These were two small districts, mere strips of country along the left bank of the river—Upper Germany stretching roughly from Strassburg to Coblenz, Lower Germany from Coblenz to the German Ocean. Acting as the bulwark of Gaul against the tribes, each was occupied by four legions in permanent encampments, the chief seat of the governor and army of the upper province being Moguntiacum (Mainz), of the lower, Castra Vetera (Xanten). Legions were also quartered after the middle of the century at Novaesium (Neuss) and Bonn in the lower, and probably Argentoratum (Strassburg) in the upper province. The founding of the great civil settlement of Cologne in the lower province had been one of the last of Claudius' acts in the district. A certain control

was always exercised over the natives on the right bank, lands being claimed, and at times garrisons pushed forward over the river. But a resolute policy of advance over the Rhine from the upper province does not begin until the Flavians. On the Lower Rhine the pressure of the tribes which had harassed Caesar so greatly died away, but the Romans make no advance over the river.

The events during Nero's Principate in Germany illustrate this policy of the Julio-Claudian Emperors very well. "Upper Germany" only once detains the attention. In A.D. 56 its governor, L. Antistius Vetus, finding nothing to do with the tribes over the river, devised a great engineering scheme such as in ancient times only a Roman could plan. He proposed to cut a canal from the Upper Moselle to the Upper Saône, thus securing water transport all the way from the Mediterranean to the German Ocean, viâ the Rhone, Saône, Moselle, and Rhine. The acquisition of Britain had undoubtedly increased the importance of the German Ocean to the Romans, and the communications of Germany and Northern Gaul with Rome would have been much improved by the canal. But the scheme shipwrecked on the opposition of the governor of Belgica, Aelius Gracilis, through whose province the Moselle ran for the greater part of its course. He judged that it would disturb the province, notoriously the most excitable of all the Gallic districts, and pointed out this and other dangers to Vetus. Vetus therefore abandoned the plan, which, unlike other Roman engineering projects, has never been completed in modern times. And his successor, T. Curtilius Mancia, did not revive it.

In the lower province, however, the troops were employed on actual engineering works of public utility. Thus under Claudius, Corbulo, in A.D. 47, forbidden by the Emperor to cross the Rhine on an expedition against the Chauci, set his disappointed men to work at once on digging a canal twenty-three miles long between the Mosa and the Rhine, that the fleet might escape the dangerous voyage along the open coast. Nero's governor in A.D. 55, Pompeius Paulinus, continued Corbulo's policy, and finding that a dam, which the Imperial Prince Drusus had begun before B.C. 9 on the Gallic side of the Lower Rhine to prevent floods, had not been finished, he and his troops completed the work. Paulinus was succeeded by L. Dubius Avitus in A.D. 57, and now the tribes over the river began to be troublesome. The tribe of

the Frisii dwelt along the present Dutch coast between the Zuyder Zee and the mouth of the Weser. Ten years earlier they had been restless, but Corbulo had quieted them. Now they took up their belongings and migrated *en masse.* Through various migrations of tribes a large tract of rich grazing ground, situate probably between the rivers Lippe and Ems round Münster, was at the time vacant. It had for a long time past been used by the Romans as pasturage for their horses. But when Corbulo had withdrawn all his troops across the Rhine, and succeeding governors made no sign of recrossing it for hostile purposes, the Frisii cast covetous eyes upon this tract. Under their leaders, Verritus and Malorix, they left their old homes by the sea, and settled down quietly on the vacant land. They had already sown the fields for their first crop when the governor Avitus interfered. Even though the Romans had no troops in the district, it was no part of their defensive policy to allow the tribes over the river freedom to wander about as they liked so near the frontier. A migration once begun might have effects as hard to stop as is a rock rolling down a grassy hillside, and it was not only the loss of the former pasture grounds which required action on Avitus' part. He firmly demanded of the Frisii, either that they should return at once to their former abodes, or that they should send to Rome and obtain Nero's sanction for their change of seat.

Rather than fight, Verritus and Malorix proceeded to Rome. The Emperor being unable to give them immediate audience, they were taken on tour through the city, and visited Pompeius' theatre during a performance, that the sight of the vast audience might impress them. The people interested them far more than the play, and they plied their guides with many questions. The Senators' seats were pointed out to them, and in them they noticed some of foreign dress who were obvious strangers. Who, they asked, were these folk among the Senators? When told that envoys from brave nations in friendly alliance with Rome were allowed that honour, "What!" cried the rough Frisians, "could there be any people on the face of the earth who came before the Germans, either in valour or in loyalty?" And at once the two chiefs made their way through the audience and took their places among the Senators of Rome, while the spectators applauded in great good-humour.

Nero was no less kind in the reception he gave them, but

he refused their request on their tribe's behalf. The calm appropriation of rich territory must needs excite the greed and resentment of the neighbouring tribes, and issue in further trouble. The Emperor even bestowed the Roman citizenship on the two envoys, but he could not grant them the desired boon. They returned with orders to go back to their own land, and the command was enforced by a troop of auxiliary cavalry, who, on resistance being offered, slew some of the tribe and captured others.

Upon the desired lands thus once more left vacant there descended a more powerful tribe, and one in yet more pitiful case, because with greater need. The unlucky Ampsivarii were vagrants then upon the face of the earth, driven by the Chauci from their homes. Their old leader Boiocalus justified to the Roman governor their seizure of the unoccupied tract with native eloquence. He had been fifty years Rome's steadfast ally, ever since his loyalty had earned him bonds at Arminius' hands. He had kept his tribe obedient to the Romans' commands. Were men to die of hunger that the beasts of the field might be fed? The earth belonged to mankind, and empty lands to the homeless. Might his gods, the sun and stars of heaven, pour the sea over the fields rather than see them undwelt in and untilled, in very spite of those who snatched them from the use of man!

Avitus was touched by the appeal, but firm. Their gods, he told the tribe, had given all power to the Romans, whose now it was to give and to take away. They might not have the lands. To Boiocalus, however, he offered lands privately in memory of old friendship, but the aged chieftain spurned the offer. He would be no traitor to his folk. They might lack land to live upon: they could not fail to find soil on which to die. The palaver broke up in anger, and the tribe called upon others to aid them in the war. But the Romans under Avitus crossed the Rhine, and Curtilius Mancia from the upper province threatened them in the rear. The Ampsivarii found no helpers, and, driven out again, wandered helplessly from tribe to tribe, spurned forth by one after another until, their young men falling beneath the foemen's sword, and their maidens the booty of the stronger, they disappeared from the Roman ken into the dark forests of central Germany, and were seen no more.

Such rare misfortunes as befel the Roman Rhineland were dealt it, not by the tribes over the river, but by the stroke of

fortune. A fierce moorland fire devoured the lands of the Ubii and spread to the very walls of the chief city of their territory, Cologne. No rain checked it, and the river water was of no avail. Fighting the flames as wild beasts with stones and sticks, casting their very garments upon the fire, they hardly saved the city. Over the river in the same year, A.D. 58, the more distant tribes ravaged and slew. Two folk, the Chatti of Hessen and Hermunduri of the Thüringer Wald, fell to fighting with religious zeal for a holy spot, the groves of the Salt River, the Thüringian Saale, and they who had vowed to sacrifice to their gods every living thing of their foes met with that fate themselves instead. Thus the robber Chatti were worsted. The victors were the friends, the defeated the enemy, of Rome. But which tribe of savages exterminated which other amid those distant hills across the Rhine or on those lonely unknown streams which poured their waters into the Roman river, this mattered little to the Roman governors, keeping anxious watch and ward over the Rhineland. Nay, the more who perished, the fewer there might be hereafter to threaten the Roman peace. Within the screen of their resolute and vigilant defence, the Roman Empire in Western Europe prospered under Nero in confident security.[1]

§ 6. The Danube and the Black Sea

We propose to complete the survey of Nero's foreign policy by following the line which connects the west with the eastern frontier. Only the wars in Judaea may be reserved for a subsequent chapter. It has been shown that under Nero the frontiers on the east and on the Rhine were preserved, and in Britain advanced. On the south of the Empire there is no change. Nero, it is said, did once so far plan the extension of his Egyptian province southwards as to study the map of Ethiopia, and despatch a small military exploring party up the Nile. These returned with tales of parrots, sphinxes, the rhinoceros and elephant, and dog-headed men in the deserts. They had reached, they said, to Meroe, 871 miles by their careful measurement from Syene. Candace was Queen there of the Ethiopians. In that region there were vast marshes, of which none knew the extent, not

[1] See note at end.

even the natives. For they were not navigable owing to the impenetrable weed which choked the water. There too, they said, they saw two rocks out of which a great volume of water poured. The report was certainly honest. Nero abandoned his proposed expedition. Or, more probably, as Seneca says, his was only a lively curiosity to discover the source of the Nile.[1]

Yet even so the sneer of his biographer, that "Nero never was moved by either wish or hope to increase and spread the Empire"[2] is neither very valuable in itself nor entirely true, as has been seen in Armenia and Britain and North Italy. And further study shows that remark to have been little but a flattery to the Flavian Emperors, so marked is its injustice, even if it be Nero's chief fame that he preserved rather than extended the Empire in the East, in Britain, and Judaea. To the Emperor may be ascribed a remarkable policy besides, and one steadily pursued for a dozen years, namely, the making of the Black Sea into a Roman lake.

If princes after Nero abandoned the uncompleted plan, this was probably because the tribes over the Danube claimed their more anxious consideration.

But under Nero the Danube frontier had not become that source of grave anxiety to the Roman Emperor which it was to prove at the end of the first century and for all the years to follow. Moesia, the province which reached from Belgrade to the Black Sea, was, towards the end of Nero's reign, under the government of the legate Tiberius Plautius Silvanus Aelianus, and it is to an inscription narrating this officer's services, which was found at Tivoli, and not to our historians proper, that we owe most of the facts following.[3] Silvanus' activity was great. Following a plan which had been very popular on the Rhine frontier earlier in the century, and doubtless with Nero's sanction, he transferred more than one hundred thousand natives from the farther shore of the great river to the Roman province, and settled them there, with their chieftains, their wives, and their children, on lands which were given them. Thus they became Rome's subjects and her tributaries, and, it might be hoped, a barrier against the independent tribes across the Danube, if ever these pressed southwards. It was not, as in the dying Empire of the fifth century, that "the Emperor gracefully presented them with

[1] See note at end. [2] Suetonius, c. 18. [3] See note at end.

the country of which they had already taken possession."[1] But the policy of "slaying Goths by Goths," of making "the Teuton mercenary of the Roman," was a very early device of the Empire. Yet under Nero such aggression as there might be over the Danube came from the Roman side. In the valley of the Theiss, stretching up for some hundreds of miles north of the modern Belgrade, and on the rolling steppes to the east of it dwelt the Sarmatae, always a thorn in the side of the Empire. But Plautius Silvanus quelled, in A.D. 62, a rising disturbance among that people, and that though one of his two legions, the Fifth (Macedonica), had, as we have seen, been sent away to the Armenian War,[2] leaving him but the Eighth Legion, called Augusta for its very valiant services in these his expeditions. Farther east, the Dacian princes beyond the river did reverence to the Roman standards, and perhaps gave hostages as pledges for their good behaviour. Thus vigorously did Nero's governor on the Danube "confirm the peace of his province."

But neither prince nor legate rested content with these results, results which Marcus Aurelius a century later would have welcomed with great joy. Strictly beyond the limits of Moesia there stretched from the Danube's mouth eastwards all the rich corn lands of the district north of the Black Sea, known as Scythia to the earlier Greeks. Here were old Greek towns fringing the coasts and at the mouths of the mighty rivers which flowed from the mysterious north. And to this district Plautius Silvanus pushed his arms. With the kings of the tribes of the interior, the Bastarnae and Roxolani, he established friendly relations. The city of Tyra beyond the Danube at the next great river, the Dniester's inflow into the Black Sea, had already, in A.D. 57, been incorporated, perhaps by Flavius Sabinus before Silvanus' time, into the Roman Empire. But now Silvanus pushed on far beyond it and the Borysthenes river to the Crimea itself, where he deposed by force the King of the Scythians of this the "Tauric Chersonese." And if he was, as the inscription records, the first to send a great quantity of wheat from his province for the corn supply at Rome, this was because he first sought to add the granary north of the Black Sea to the Empire. Plautius Silvanus had well earned the insignia of a triumph, which Vespasian bestowed upon him after Nero's death.

[1] Kingsley, "The Roman and the Teuton," c. 4. [2] *Cf.* above, Chap. V., sec. 6.

Thus under Nero, Roman arms had by A.D. 63 been stretched out to grasp as far as the Crimea on the north of the sea. And so far-reaching must be the power of the legate of Moesia, that by A.D. 66 a second legion, the Seventh, surnamed Claudia, had been sent to him from Dalmatia to replace the legion sent to Cappadocia. For not content with the Crimea the Roman must extend his sway as far as Colchis itself, over the Heniochi, the Tauri, the Bosporani, whose king, Cotys I., issues no more independent coinage after A.D. 63 so long as Nero lives, and in general to the tribes of Lake Maeotis and the entire northern shore. Forty Roman warships were now maintained to "keep the peace on the hitherto desolate and angry sea."[1]

Meanwhile the Roman appropriation of the Black Sea was completed on its southern shores. Up to the year A.D. 63, the district of Pontus, stretching eastwards from the river Halys to Colchis, was ruled by King Polemon II., who had come to his power in A.D. 37. But in A.D. 63, the king resigned his kingdom, himself perhaps becoming one of "Les Rois en exil" in Cilicia. And his dominions now became Roman provincial territory, the very towns therein, as the great port Trapezus, and those of the Lycus valley, dating a new era from this year upon their coins.[1]

We deduce therefore the conclusion that Nero's policy had for many years past been firmly prosecuted, despite the wars and rumours of wars upon the frontiers elsewhere, namely the policy of the complete Romanisation of the entire shores of the Black Sea. The chief work must be done on the north, from Moesia as a base. When that draws near completion, the incorporation of Pontus on the south is effected. And the Roman war fleet sails its waters. It was a policy well-devised and steadily pursued, well worthy of ranking beside Nero's Armenian policy, of which it is, as it were, the complement, and links the far Eastern frontier with the Danube, so with the Rhine, and on to Gaul and distant Britain. The circuit of the Empire is complete at last.

One finishing stroke was necessary, and to this Nero set his hand in the last year of his reign. The Roman chain was still weakest in the far north-east by Colchis, and the tribes north of the Caucasus, the Alani in particular, might give trouble at any moment, not only to Armenia (that was now

[1] See note at end.

the Parthian's business as well at least as Rome's), but also to the valley of the Phasis and Trapezus. Nero planned an expedition to the "Caspian," or rather (as Pliny rightly corrects the popular name) to the "Caucasian," Gates, that is to the modern Dariel Pass over the Caucasus. Rightly viewed, the project is no freak or whim of an eccentric Emperor, nor does it stand in isolated peculiarity. It is the consummation of a policy pursued for a dozen years. Whether its object was simply to block and garrison the pass, or to attack the Alans beyond the mountains, is uncertain, but the latter is more probable, as Nero made great preparations for the expedition. Troops were summoned from Germany and from Illyricum. The famous Fourteenth Legion, with eight Batavian cohorts attached, was recalled from Britain to serve in the far north-east, the island being now happily quiet. And a new legion of picked men, each to be six feet tall at least, was to be raised in Italy, which the Emperor proposed to nickname the "Phalanx of Alexander the Great." All these preparations were cut abruptly short, and the movements of the troops were cancelled, by the great revolt against Nero, which broke out in Gaul, and cost him, as we shall see, his throne and his life.[1]

The chapters on the Emperor's foreign policy are ended. We have made the circuit of the frontiers from Armenia to Britain, and back by the Rhine and Danube to the Black Sea and the Caucasus. We have found perils overcome, diplomacy triumphant, rebellion crushed, frontiers advanced, peace undisturbed within them. New Roman generals have established claims upon our remembrance, a Suetonius, a Silvanus, an Avitus, but chief of all, Domitius Corbulo. How can we praise the Roman troops enough, save in our British general's sober words of last greeting to the Army of South Africa? "The qualities of endurance and resolution which they have displayed are much more valuable to a commander than any dashing or short-lived effort, whereby some hard-fought actions may be won in a campaign of ordinary duration." The Romans too were "called upon for increasing and ever-increasing exertions in the face of great hardships and other difficulties against dangerous and elusive antagonists." Thus the Roman, as the British, stubborn tenacity plucked triumph out of defeat, and victorious peace out of disaster. And we cannot deny all praise and all merit to the Emperor whose were the generals

[1] See note at end.

and the legions, who determined the policy, and guided the counsels, and ruled the armies from the Euphrates to the Irish Sea. Nero has served the Empire, and no prejudice can deny the fact. That prejudice must feed rather upon the events in Rome, to which again we turn.

CHAPTER VII

The Fire of Rome and its Consequences, A.D. 64

§ 1. Art and Revelry.
§ 2. The Fire of Rome.
§ 3. The Rebuilding of the City.
§ 4. The Golden House.
§ 5. The Persecution of the Christians.

"Ilicet ignis edax summa ad fastigia vento
Volvitur, exsuperant flammae, furit aestus ad auras."

(Vergil, *Aeneid II.*)

NERO

FROM THE BASALT BUST IN THE UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE

Probably a modern work

CHAPTER VII

1. Art and Revelry

NERO'S early passion for music, poetry, and the fine arts, grew stronger with its indulgence, as did his taste for revellings and more discreditable amusements. His taste in art was catholic. In sculpture he took special delight in Strongylion's statue of an Amazon, and Lysippus' of Alexander the Great. The former he had carried about with him on every journey; the latter he had gilded over, a common taste in antiquity. In the ruins of his palace at Antium were found, it is said, the Apollo Belvedere of the Vatican and the Fighting Gladiator; in those of his Golden Palace in Rome the great vase of the Vatican, and, hard by, the Laocoon. The colossal statue of himself which adorned this palace will presently be described. The Emperor also was a patron of the sister art of painting. In the Temple of the Divine Julius, built by Augustus in the Roman forum, was Apelles' famous picture of Venus Anadyomene. But it was now much decayed and incapable of restoration, and Nero had it replaced by another from the brush of Dorotheus. There was a popular taste for portrait painting on a large scale, and a freedman who gave at Antium a gladiatorial display must needs have the likenesses of all his performers painted in the public colonnade. This may have been but the equivalent of the advertisement of to-day, but the gigantic portrait of the Emperor, 120 feet high, and "as large as the main-sail of a frigate," with which a wall in one of the rooms of a palace in the Lamian Gardens on the Esquiline was covered, certainly claims a peculiar place for itself in the unhappy annals of Art. The Gods, however, sent lightning, as at Subiaco, and, aiming this time more surely, destroyed it. The poetaster Eumolpus in the romance of Petronius explained the decay of painting to Encolpius in the public picture gallery at Puteoli. "It is all due to this luxurious and effeminate age. We criticise antiquity and copy only its faults. No wonder

the art of painting is degenerate when all, Gods and men alike, think a block of gold more beautiful than any work of Apelles or of Phidias, those madmen Greeklings." And indeed the taste of the age of Nero soon preferred marble, artificially stained and coloured by a newly-invented process, to any paintings.[1]

But both sculpture and painting yielded in Nero's fancy to poetry and music. He himself wrote poetry, a Trojan epic, another poem with the title Luscio, another wherein he sang the praises of Poppaea's golden hair. His poetry was called learned in antiquity, and the solitary four-and-a-half lines which are all that are left of it to-day merit that title rather than the praise for its artistic charm and harmony which the modern critic awards to it. Yet the Imperial poet was not without encouragement. A lampoon of his was enough to create a conspirator against his life, and few poems meet with so notable a recognition of their sting. His more courtly verses, recited by the poet himself in the theatre, were acclaimed with the thanksgivings of a public rejoicing, and part of them, writ in golden letters, was offered to Jupiter on the Capitol. How, we may wonder, could the Imperial singer endure the sacrifice so meekly of any part of his golden verse? But epic was his chief delight. He recited his Trojan epic in the theatre, and designed to bring the whole of Roman history within the compass of another. But here fate dealt with him unkindly, for that, as he had sate himself down to count the number of books wherein the new epic should be contained, she sent to him a philosopher of repute, Annaeus Cornutus by name. "Surely four hundred were the due number," cried an admiring courtier. "Nay," quoth the Stoic sage, "the number methinks is somewhat over great, and there is none will read so many." "But," said the plaintive Emperor, "that Chrysippus whom thou dost magnify and strive to emulate, wrote he not many more than this?" "Verily," replied the sage reflectively, "but his books were useful." If the indignant Prince rewarded the man of wisdom and renown with exile, surely so *gauche* a remark scarce merited a lighter fate, even though uttered by a philosopher, even by one who was the poet Lucan's teacher, and acquainted with the merits of his wordy pupil's verse. Unhappy "martyr of philosophy," yet even so scarce comparable to religion's heroes!

[1] See note at end.

At times Nero would gratify his taste for poetry in company, and invite to dine with him a number of other poets, whose genius was as yet unrecognised by the ungrateful world. They would spend the happy hours together, spinning rhymes and weaving fancies. Rough copies of the Imperial poems were extant fifty years later, the words underlined, crossed out, full of emendations. The joint efforts of the assembly limped heavily at times in the struggle to conduct the half-finished verses up the steep mountain side of poesy. When weary of poetic effort, Nero would for relaxation's sake call in the philosophers after supper, and listen with a malicious, yet a very human, delight when they supported each his philosophic theory with quarrelsome zeal. The chief of Nero's poetic circle was the poet Lucan, two years the Emperor's junior, and called by him to Rome from Athens to share the enjoyment of poetry. It was sad that the Court fashion in versification was not beloved by the common folk, and was even ridiculed by the Roman novelist. Petronius' Eumolpus in the picture gallery found an unwilling victim. "Enraptured by that painting of Troy's Capture, I perceive, my friend! Come, listen to my poem on the subject!" They endured for near seventy lines (and in fact no one to this day is certain whether those verses be not poetry in very truth). But then they could endure no more. Stones rained upon the poet. This he had foreseen, and covering his head he fled. The wedding guest, "terribly afraid lest they should take me for a poet too," fled after, and overtook his ancient mariner out of missile range on the shore. "Pray tell me," cried he, "this strange malady of yours, what can it be? I've known you scarcely two hours yet, and had more verse than prose from you already. No wonder they throw stones!" And only on the reluctant promise given that he will talk no more poetry for the remainder of the day, will the hero ask the poet home to dinner. It is all very happy pleasantry this, perhaps even aimed at the Emperor and his Trojan epic besides. But Petronius could dare good-humoured liberties with Nero.[1]

At other times the Emperor would sit hour after hour after supper listening to Terpnus, the chief musician of the day, whom he had summoned to Court immediately on attaining to power. But

"Semper ego auditor tantum? Nunquamne reponam?"

[1] See note at end.

this might surely apply to the giving of artistic pleasure as well as to the infliction of poetry's pain. His semi-private performances at the Juvenilia did not content Nero.[1] His voice was surely worthy of a larger audience. At first essaying the musical art timorously and in private, the Emperor soon found his confidence increase. He bestowed the greatest care upon his voice, observing with assiduity all the rules of the profession for its preservation, refraining from bread on fixed days every month for its sake, and showing so great a belief in the efficacy of cut leeks, that the profession confidently recommended their use to public singers ever after. Nero's voice was in fact thin and inclined to be hoarse, but he himself was proud of it, and longed impatiently for its trial in public. "There is no respect for hidden music," he would declare, quoting a Greek proverb.

Yet he could not shut his eyes to the prejudice which existed at Rome against an Emperor's appearance on the public stage. Artists were always lightly esteemed in the city, and the practice of art was held unworthy of a gentleman. The Greeks had no such scruples. Hence for his first performance in public Nero, in A.D. 64, selected the Grecised city of Naples, and an audience in the main provincial. No sooner was the theatre empty than an earthquake hurled it to the ground. Again the Gods were bad marksmen, and Nero thanked them prettily in an ode for his preservation. From Naples he departed for the upland city of Beneventum, which lay on the high road for Brundisium. Already his thoughts turned longingly towards Greece, the home of all the arts. Could he but win there the famous prizes of old time for music and poetry, he might then return to appeal with confidence even to the stolid boorish taste of the Roman philistine. The sacred garlands which Greece awarded to her victors already, in the Emperor's imagination, decked his brow. But at Beneventum he tarried for a while to witness a gladiatorial display given by the Court Fool, Vatinius, a scurrilous monstrosity of a deformed long-nosed little cobbler's apprentice, according to our historian, whose wit won him favour and influence with Nero. And there the Emperor suddenly relinquished his project of proceeding to Greece, and returned to Rome. He had been seized by a sudden desire to travel to Egypt instead.

On the very day however of his intended sailing to

[1] *Cf. supra*, p. 130.

Alexandria portents, it was said, alarmed him. As he bade farewell in Vesta's Temple in the Forum to the Household Gods of Rome, a thick mist wrapped him round, and a vague panic seized him. Indeed plot and conspiracy were already ripening against his life and rule, and, though he had no hint of this, he did well to stay in Rome, and not leave the field vacant for his secret enemies. An edict explained that the grief depicted on the citizens' faces at thought of his departure had turned the Emperor from his purpose. And the populace undoubtedly rejoiced. Nero's presence they held to be a guarantee alike for their food-supply and for their games. Rome was never so gay as when he was in the city.[1]

Pleasures indeed of a grosser sort might be enjoyed in Rome, even at the expense of triumph in music and in song, and Nero now abandoned himself to their delight. Everything was prospering in Rome, in Italy, in the Empire, on the frontiers. Had he any claim upon him, this young Roman Emperor, which should forbid him to enjoy life in his own way? His banquets became speedily notorious. Feasts begun at noon were prolonged to midnight. His friends when he asked himself to their entertainments must spend a fortune on their dinners, and four million sesterces at one feast on roses alone. If luxury in Rome and in the country towns overleapt all limits which man's brain can conceive, it was the Emperor who set the example. The tales of his extravagances befit the fabled wealth of Arabian genii, the opulence of Prester John. Men said he played at dice with thousands of sesterces staked on every pip; that he never wore the same robe twice; that his fishing nets were golden with meshes of purple and crimson silk; that on a journey never fewer than a thousand state coaches attended him. His mules were shod with silver; his muleteers were clad in the softest of Canusium's woollen raiment; his African outriders and couriers were gay with trappings and decorations. Palaces and estates in town and country were his gifts to his favourites, a musician, a gladiator, a money-lender. Those who kept any count of how the money went, avowed the Emperor, were poor, niggard, mean-spirited fellows of the baser sort. Doubtless there is much that is exaggerated in the tales. And the magnificence of the Court served also political ends, in pleasing the public and securing its allegiance, in "challenging comparison in these respects with his great rival, the 'King of Kings'

[1] See note at end.

beyond the Euphrates," and in widening and emphasising the width of the gulf separating the Emperor from his nobles.[1] The death by suicide, consequent upon an accusation of treason, of the last surviving great-great-grandson of Augustus (save for Nero himself) in this year, A.D. 64, was also significant of this. Decius Junius Silanus Torquatus, brother of Octavia's betrothed, and of Marcus the "Golden Sheep,"[2] died for the charge that his freedmen bore the same titles which the Imperial freedmen should now henceforward appropriate to their exclusive honour. Yet they were harmless titles enough, save that the noble challenged thereby comparison with the Court. In reality his high descent was fatal to him. But regard must also be paid to the meaning and the causes of the "increased outward splendour of Caesar's position."[1]

Tigellinus was Nero's master of the revels, the deviser of his feasts and of his debaucheries. One such revel is painted by the Roman historian to serve as one illustration out of many, a revel on "Agrippa's Pond," which may have been near the great Trevi Fountain, the joy of busy Rome and idle visitor to-day. On a raft covered with purple carpets and delicate rugs reclined the banqueters, and vessels, themselves bright with gold and ivory, towed it to and fro on the lake. Strange birds and beasts from many lands were gathered there, and sea monsters swam in the water. The banks were lined with arbours and summer houses, crowded with women of every rank, station, and condition, willing and unwilling partners of the rout. As night came on, the groves round the pool echoed with song and sounds of merriment, and flaring torches shone upon the fantastic carnival of mad revelry and of vice, open, unrestrained, incredible. We cannot dwell longer upon such scenes, or upon the tales of Nero's lust and orgies, upon which the chroniclers of the time dwell with gloating. We do no injustice to the Muse of history in our haste to pass by, in our distaste to enter upon, that precision of detail which they loved. Her task is not the *Chronique scandaleuse* of Vice. Be it granted that the Emperor, trained from his youth up in neither self-restraint nor purity, deeming all men at heart like to himself, save that they were guiltier in their dishonesty of concealment, boasted himself unnatural debauchee and profligate, corrupting others and himself corrupted, till even Roman Society sickened at the sight. Historical truth may here gain nothing

[1] Pelham, *Outlines*, p. 454. [2] See above; pp. 29–30 and 57.

from Parisian minuteness of nauseous portrayal, if a man will be content, even in its absence, to believe that the sin (we fairly use Religion's terms) which flaunted its immodesty in the palace, in the streets, on the river-banks of Rome, was vile, its shamelessness abomination. There is none compelled to read the record but would confess it. And History admits that it was Religion which now challenged tastes among the low born and the slaves on whose indulgence by those of every class and either sex philosophy had long since looked with ineffective dislike. Now there comes the first sudden sharp test of this Christianity, owing immediately to a catastrophe which befel Rome during this summer.

§ 2. The Fire of Rome

On July 19, A.D. 64, the day upon which, as men gloomily recalled, Rome had been sacked by the Gauls four and a-half centuries before, there broke out at night time in the city a fire which is the greatest of all such disasters in Roman annals. Beginning at the east end of the Great Circus at the base of the Palatine and Caelian Hills, it raged for six days, and then, breaking out again when the evil seemed ended, continued for three days more, and laid great part of the entire city in ashes. Some of the very inflammable material stored in the shops in this part of the circus caught fire, and the flames, leaping up and fanned by a strong south-east wind, drove with a rush along the great open channel of the circus, whose wooden seats afforded ready fuel, and no stout building or Temple wall stood there which might have arrested their progress early. In a brief space of time the whole broad valley between the Palatine and Aventine Hills was a sea of fire, which spread thence far and wide over the city, checked only by the river from spreading to the Trans-tiberine quarter. The fire brigade was helpless altogether. The flames, now climbing the hillsides and licking up the buildings and temples which crowned them, now ravaging along the lower levels, far outstripped all efforts to contain them. They roared along the narrow crooked streets of the old city, which remained to show how hastily Rome had been rebuilt after its sack by Brennus; they leapt up the huge barrack-like blocks of squalid buildings which, lining either roadside, created the draught of air to sweep the fire along, and supplied the fuel for its increase. The inhabitants were

caught in a sudden destruction. Every way as yet untouched by the flames was choked and blocked by wailing women, crying terrified children, the weary, the aged, the infirm, strong men bent on the hopeless rescue of those they loved, guiding the steps of the weak, lingering to help the old and feeble, or cravens, distraught by panic and selfish terror. Did they tarry to glance back, the foe swept round them on the sides and cut off their retreat. From nearer places of refuge they were driven forward to discover that haunts which they had deemed far from the pitiless fire's reach were already in the grip of the destroyer. They knew not what to seek or what to shun. They filled the ways; they were strewn over the fields; they hurried for refuge to the tombs. Some, their homes consumed, themselves ruined and starving, others for very love of those whom they had failed to save, perished rather than seek a way of escape which they might yet have found. If any dared to attack the flames, men with fierce threats and insane glee stayed their hand, hurling fiery brands broadcast, now in delirious merriment, now greedy of further sack and plunder, shouting that they had authority for their savage deeds.

Was this authority the Emperor himself? The dark suspicion sprang to birth; the rumour spread from man to man. Sufferers, maddened by loss and death, wild with dread and excitement, did not wait to balance probabilities. "The most incredible stories are the best adapted to the genius of an enraged people."[1] Secret conspirators caught gladly at the chance and fostered the accusation. It was in vain that Nero, as if to give the lie to such suspicions, had been thirty-five miles away from Rome at Antium when the fire broke out. It was in vain that, when he heard that his palace building, which led from Palatine to Esquiline, was imperilled, he returned to Rome and threw himself with energy into the work of rescue and battle with the flames. It was in vain that his own palace fell their victim, that treasures of art which he had so dearly prized and so laboriously accumulated were consumed and perished in a moment before his very eyes. He struggled manfully to remedy the great disaster. He opened the Campus Martius by the riverside, and all the public buildings upon it, to harbour the homeless. He built shelters in his own gardens to house them. He hurried stores up from Ostia and the

[1] Gibbon, c. xvi.

neighbouring towns to feed them. He fixed the cost of corn at about half the prevailing market price. Though conspirators were seeking his life, though the populace looked at him gloomily and askance, he was fearless, wandering alone through the streets without a guard or companions, roaming the city all night long as his palace flared away to ruin, saved from the dagger only by the assassin's hesitation. Nero's efforts at succour and his careless exposure of his person were, for his reputation's sake, quite useless. The ruler must bear the credit for all disaster, and the thoughtless anger of the ruined denounced the Emperor as the author of the conflagration. Rome, said they, the crowded, close-packed Rome, was distasteful and ugly in his eyes, and this was the occasion which he had fiendishly devised for its rebuilding on an ampler, fairer scale. Earth's total conflagration, that fiction of philosophers, he would have realised in his very lifetime and enjoy the sight. Or was he not a dramatist? The poet writing upon the sack of Troy must for his poem's sake witness a burning city. As the flames and smoke mounted to heaven, their Emperor, men whispered, had been seen upon Maecenas' tower on the Esquiline height, clad in habit of the stage, gazing down upon the lurid inferno underneath, revelling at sight of the beauty of the flames chanting in wild glee the song of Ilium's capture. And this last, indeed, alone of all the screed of silly accusations may well be historic fact. The scene was a temptation which no impressionist artist could easily resist, and the young artist Emperor least of all. The tragic song over his burning capital were no such heinous or unnatural crime as by itself to prove him author of the ruin. Widely improbable as the attendant circumstances prove this last charge to be, the foolish must needs draw the conclusion, the later rhetorician antedate the Emperor's desire, and give a much-needed plausibility to the tale. The vision of "Nero fiddling while Rome burned" is stamped for ever upon the imagination and memory of mankind. But this proves that Rome burned because Nero longed to fiddle at its burning only to that excited and pleased popular fancy, which cuddles to its heart the thought of the dissolute, maniacal young Prince chanting with a frenzied mirth, or with the solemn parade of holy tragedy, over the dancing flames which owe their being and their feast to him. I have dwelt in Rome under the very shadow of "Nero's Tower," so called because from it he gazed

and sang over the burning city; yet from its site this very mediaeval tower of the Caetani could scarcely have escaped the flames, had it been built a thousand years before. It would indeed be foolish to expect that from the premiss of the song the mob's fancy would not deduce the well-nigh impossible conclusion of the crime. Thus Art and Drama revenged themselves upon the artist.

"Such a price
The Gods exact for song:
To become what we sing."[1]

Not only was imperial help for the homeless readily forthcoming, but great efforts were made, despite the silly threats of individuals, to check the fire. Great blocks of buildings were demolished and open spaces cleared at the foot of the Esquiline, and with some success. For the flames died away here on the sixth day, and the worst of the evil seemed to be past. Yet, as so great a fire is apt to do, it burst out again with equal fury far away from here in the heart of the city, on a site where, later, Trajan built his forum, but which then was occupied by Tigellinus' gardens. This must needs make men declare that Nero would destroy Rome utterly and win for himself the fame as second founder of the city, which should be called by his own name. For three days more the fire continued unabated, and ceased on July the twenty-eighth.

The losses were very great, when men came to count them. The great fire of London ravaged nearly four hundred and fifty acres in four days. The fire of Rome had raged for more than twice as long. Of the fourteen regions into which Augustus had divided the city, only four had escaped entirely scatheless; the First, "Porta Capena," to the south-east of the Circus where the fire began, and thus saved by the south-east wind; the Fourteenth, which lay over the Tiber and so escaped; and probably the Fifth, "Esquiliae," and Sixth, "Alta Semita," which were on the north-east of the city, on the site of the later Diocletian Baths and modern Central Railway Station. These may have been saved by the clearances at the northern base of the Esquiline. No other region in Rome but had to deplore some loss, although much remained unhurt. The Roman forum, the western slope of the Palatine, the Capitoline, and most of the buildings in the

[1] See note at end.

Campus Martius, were, it seems, untouched, and the two regions in which these were included, the Eighth, "Forum Romanum," and Ninth, the "Circus Flaminius," as well as the Twelfth, "Piscina Publica," to the south-east of the Aventine hill, escaped lightly. But the remaining seven regions were very sorely ravaged. Luxury had been spared no better than poverty, and the most sacred and venerable shrines of the gods had suffered equally with the hovels and garrets of the beggar. Luna's Temple on the Aventine, which King Servius Tullius had built; the Fane and Altar which Arcadian Evander had consecrated to the hero Hercules; Romulus' Temple to Jupiter, the Stayer of Flight; Numa's Palace; Vesta's Shrine hard by the forum, with the Household Gods of Rome; all these relics of that dim and perished monarchy, together with the later spoils of many a famous victory, history's records, and the chief glories of Greek Art, were destroyed and utterly consumed. However beautiful and spacious the new-built city, such losses were irreparable. "Historic Rome then went to wreck for ever."[1] The plaint is exaggerated, and the Empire builds up another Historic Rome. The vanished memorials of lost monarchy yield their place to the greater splendours of the new Empire. New lives spring up to fill the room of the many who perished in the flames: new palaces and new temples replace the lost dwellings of noble and of god. Yet at the time men's wrath and men's mourning were not lightly to be appeased.[2]

§ 3. The Rebuilding of the City

Two tasks of rebuilding confronted the Emperor when the fire ceased—that of the city and that of his own fair name and popularity with the people, a fair name and a popularity which he always cherished. To both tasks he now addressed himself.

The rebuilding of the city was pursued with wisdom and with system. The narrow winding streets of the old town, and their towering buildings, had endangered alike the safety and the health of the inhabitants. And they were dark and ugly, ugly as the mud swamps of Ravenna. Now in their stead broad streets were laid out in regular measure. The height of the houses built to flank them was diminished and a limit fixed. Open courtyards were contrived within the blocks. And long rows of pillared colonnades along the

[1] De Quincey. [2] See note at end.

houses' front afforded at once that picturesque beauty and refuge from the pursuing summer sun, which he may realise who has delighted in their presence at Padua, Belluno, or Vicenza in an Italian summer, and desired them in vain in modern Rome to-day. Nero at his own expense built the colonnades. The open spaces, cleared of the débris of the fire, were given over to their former owners for new building, and imperial donations according to the rank and wealth of each were promised, which might be claimed if the buildings were finished within an appointed time. The drain upon the Imperial Treasury was very great, but the work must be done. The rubbish of the débris of the fire was partly used for new foundations, and to raise the level of low-lying streets, but the rest was carried in the empty returning corn ships down the river, and discharged to be piled up in the marshes by Ostia, where it might serve to reclaim the land from malarious swamps or bank the fiercely rushing and devouring Tiber, into which Ostia crumbles now away. From the quarries of Gabii and the Alban Hills came fire-proof stone, of which part of each new building must be built. The public supply of water should also be more carefully controlled. A special board of custodians was appointed to prevent its misuse and misappropriation by private citizens, to effect a more plenteous supply, and to add to the numbers of the fountains in the public squares. There should also be at hand in every open court the means of checking any outbreak of fire. Nor might the new buildings have common walls. Each must be "insulated" from every other.

The cynic, "hostile to the city's happiness," professed his sole sorrow at the city's fire for that he knew that it would arise from its ashes fairer and more beautiful than the city which had perished. His sorrow was not unjustified. Rome gained in beauty, in security, and in health, despite the foolish grumblings of Conservatives who, in the new flood of light and air which poured into every quarter of the city, amid colonnade, court, and square, musical with plashing fountains, yet lamented the dark squalor of the ancient alleys which were gone. Thessalus, the popular physician of the day, inveighed against all medical precedents and boasted his new remedies. Surely Nero was his assistant, and Imperial Rome owed as much to him as to Augustus. The contrast between old and new may be that which he can see to-day who flees the dirty squalid Lateran quarter in Rome for the

gardens, fountains, and palaces of Vienna's Inner City. The record of the imperial past crushes under intolerable ignominy the Roman building of the last half century, and the better health and playing fountains of Rome of the new monarchy are but happily reminiscent of the time before sack and famine, plague and misgovernment, gave dirt for sunlit cleanliness, monasteries for baths, and malaria for longevity. Nero's own generation might curse his cruelties, but later generations owed to him an unconscious gratitude.[1]

§ 4. The Golden House

No small part, however, of the new city was reserved by the Emperor for his own use. The ruins of the great villa of Hadrian on the slope of the hill by Tivoli may to-day shadow forth Nero's plan when he commanded his two architects, Severus and Celer, to build for him a palace, which posterity called the "Domus Aurea," the Golden House, at which his own generation grumbled while it marvelled. He who now stands upon the Eastern brow of the Palatine Hill sees below him on his right a great depression, beyond which over Constantine's arch there rises the cypress-clad Caelian hill, and beneath him the ruined Flavian Coliseum in the valley with the unpicturesque Esquiline slopes behind it, where Titus built his baths. But his imagination may destroy the entire sight, and picture to itself the earlier scene when Nero's Golden House covered the valley and climbed the Esquiline hill. It was no vast barrack-visaged dwelling such as the royal palace which crowns the Quirinal to-day, no vulgar miracle of gold, ivory, and precious stones. But art gave birth in this the heart of busy Rome to a palace of natural beauty and sylvan charm of meadow, wood, and lake. On one side lay a lonely wilderness of forest, on another broad pastures and corn lands, yielding distant views.[2] Three colonnades, each a mile in length, ran through the park, within which lay the mere "like to a sea," the local springs in that marshy hollow supplying abundant water. Tame and wild beasts of every kind swarmed in the domains, and in the heart of it lay the Imperial palace. Here art and wealth defied all rivalry. Here were dining-chambers ceiled with ivory roof, which revolved to scatter flowers on the revellers or sprinkle them with per-

[1] See note at end.

[2] The rapid growth of the "silvæ" is somewhat perplexing. Perhaps the popular imagination grew as fast.

fumes; here one whose ceiling by its perpetual revolution imaged the motion of the heavens; baths flowing with the water of the distant sea or the sulphur springs of Tibur; floorings and furniture of gold or mother-of-pearl shell or gems. Here was enclosed the shrine through whose clear red-streaked walls of Cappadocian stone the light was always streaming, as through the translucent marble in the Cathedral nave of hill-set Orvieto to-day. Paintings adorned the Golden House, the "prison-house" of Amulius' the painter's art, for whose fame Nero would scarcely suffer him to paint elsewhere. In its vestibule stood a colossal bronze statue of the Emperor, 120 feet in height, the work of Zenodorus, the best sculptor of that degenerate day, a statue of such bulk that when the Emperor Hadrian would move it from its place and dedicate it elsewhere to the Sun, twenty-four elephants did the work with toil and labour. Fragments of the paintings of the Golden House were discovered after long burial during the Pontificate of Leo X., and Raphael, with his fellow-artist Giovanni of Udine, used their designs in the arabesques of the Vatican Loggia. The sack of Rome shortly following interred the relics once more till the days of Napoleon.

Thus the "Golden House" became Nero's Palace of Art. He could rejoice in it as some Bavarian Prince in the Nymphenburg Gardens, as the Prince of the Church in the Farnesina Villa by the Tiber side, and declare that at last he was housed in a fashion worthy of a man. Yet his plans were never wholly finished, for Galba his successor stayed the work. Otho sought to complete it, and the luxurious Vitellius complained in that it was not sumptuous enough. But even so the size and character of the grounds displeased, as much as the statue's colossal size delighted, the Roman taste. The Golden House "encompassed," it "besieged," the city, complained the populace. The wits declared that it swallowed the city up and would soon engulph Veii, ten miles distant:

> "The City one vast Palace is; to Veii, Romans, flee;
> But save ye haste, the Palace still will win the race from ye"

ran the popular couplet. And the shrewd old Emperor Vespasian swept the whole—palace, vineyards, park, lake, and forest—ruthlessly away, building the greatest of Roman amphitheatres to obliterate them. We concede, however, that Nero "used his country's desolation" with some taste, with a

Horatian love for nature, even though the contemporary Roman cursed the "hated palace built from the spoiling of the citizens," and welcomed with ecstasy blood-stained Coliseum and luxurious Thermae in its room.[1]

Yet Nero's woodland tastes were none the less expensive. And his passion for Greek Art was harmonious with his love of gardens, but costly. Melancholy accounts are given of the Emperor's financial straits at this time. Heavy death duties were levied in certain cases; the property of those who failed to leave substantial legacies to him was confiscated, and the lawyers who had drawn up their wills were fined; the wearing of amethystine and of Tyrian purple was forbidden, and Imperial "agents provocateurs" enticed purchasers into buying and had them hereafter at their mercy. Spying one day from the stage during one of his own performances a lady clad in the forbidden colour, Nero pointed her out to one of his agents, and she lost not only her robe but her goods as well. He never assigned an office to any man without adding the words, "And thou knowest whereof I have need," or "Let us see to it that no man possess aught." The statues of silver and gold in the temples were melted down, and the very Dii Penates were not spared.

Most of such tales of Nero's exactions, coming as they do from an entirely untrustworthy source, are probably built up out of single instances, each of which may have been capable of a more rational interpretation. That Nero caught at any good opportunity of amassing money for the great expenses of Rome's rebuilding and of his Golden House is likely. A mad Phoenician dreamer one day promised to reveal to him all Dido's buried treasures at Carthage, and when hours of digging produced no result, the Emperor's disappointment was hardly recompensed by the suicide of the visionary Bassus and the appropriation of his goods to pay for the expenses of the excavating party. Heavy contributions were, it is said, levied upon Italy and the provinces. It is curious that the Roman historian who finds it so hard to detach his attention from the city of Rome, its trivialities and its interests, should condescend on this occasion to lament the "robbery and spoliation" which now befel the provincials and Italians, the object of which was very largely the rebuilding of Rome. But the services to Rome were hidden behind the enormities of the Golden House, and, inspired by the sight of it, the writers of the

[1] See note at end.

Flavian era profess an exaggerated indignation, which conceals the fact that there is no hint of disaffection in Italy or the provinces arising from these Imperial requisitions. As for the accumulations of Temple treasures which were, it is said, appropriated by Nero, "Deorum injurias Deis curae." Wealth stored up in Temples is unproductive.

But Asia and Achaea had perhaps actual reason to deplore the Imperial fancy. The enthusiasm of an art-collector seems to claim for itself the privilege which the Pope of old time was inclined to bestow upon his turbulent artist. Nero, like Benvenuto, was so far beyond the ordinary rules of morality, and the more to be commended, as his object was robbery only and not murder. The Emperor sent a commission of two to the two provinces to collect statues and bring them to Rome. The freedman Acratus ransacked Asia, while Secundus Carrinas was prompt to console the despoiled in Greece with ready commonplaces of their own philosophers. The humourist was the more merciless. Rhodes secured exemption from the freedman's plundering, although the brave resistance offered to him by Pergamum was unavailing. But the cities of Greece mourned a common fate. Apollo of Delphi surrendered as many as five hundred statues of gods and men together, among them that of Hydna, patriot daughter of the diver Scyllis, who, as the story ran, helped her father to drag away the moorings of the proud Persian galleys on the Thessalian coast, and thus aided the raging storm to wreck the enemies of Greece. Olympia lost the works of the sculptor Micythus; Thespiae dolefully gave up Lysippus' bronze statue of Eros, which had been but newly recovered out of Caligula's clutches.

The altruistic gluttony of the commissioner knew no satisfaction. Nero in this was following early Roman precedent and common Roman practice. Marcellus, hero of the Second Punic War, had led the way, and republican generals had gladly followed in it. Such greed is not the prerogative of special types of Constitution. Moreover, spoils of an Imperial robbery and of the general of the Sans-culottes are better preserved in a Louvre than if made the dice-board of Republican troopers, or hewn in pieces with Agag and the Amalekites by Cromwellian iconoclasts. A Marcellus and a Mummius could be more gravely censured. They corrupted and debased the morals of the unkempt Roman by the trophies of Greek art. It is to be feared that

the morals of Nero and of the polished Roman of his Court were beyond even such corruption. There is no excuse for the spoliation even within the empire. Money should be voted to the Prince, whether Roman or Bavarian, for the purchase of art treasures. And if there is unhappily no money, then must the galleries and lawns and green coppices of the Golden House go bare? Surely we have the right to condemn the Roman heartily?

And it was not, as the Roman historian suggests, all for his Golden House. Two years before the great fire, Acratus had been busy in Asia. It might else have been pleaded that Nero's was but the unconquerable and temporary eagerness to replace by hook or crook some of the losses in the realm of art which were due to that catastrophe. But now his plundering becomes a characteristic depravity. And this is at once more reprehensible and more probable besides.[1]

Lack of money did not prevent Nero in this same year, 64 A.D., from employing the two architects of his Golden House upon another and a more truly Imperial work for Italy's good. The small Lake Avernus, a lagoon east of Cumae on the sea shore at the innermost recess of the Bay of Baiae, had been already connected with its neighbour the Lucrine Lake and the Bay of Naples by Augustus' minister Agrippa. Nero now commanded his architects to prepare a plan for cutting a canal, 125 miles in length, and broad enough for two war quinqueremes abreast, from this Lake Avernus to Ostia. All convict labour available was to be employed upon the work, which, when completed, would secure the communication by water between Rome and Puteoli, and enable ships to escape the storms and dangers of the open coast. The course of the great canal after piercing the hill by Cumae would lie along the sandy desolate coast northwards, and its only mountain barrier would be the intercepting ridge of Gaieta. That pierced, first the marshes of Amyclae, and then, Terracina's point once rounded, the Pomptine marshes offered an easy course and a supply of water. The canal might thus not only benefit trade, but incidentally do much towards the draining of the marshes. It was a notable project, and very unjustly the object of the historian's sneers, who appreciated neither the ends which it would serve nor its possibility. And the canal was actually

[1] See note at end.

begun; the first tunnel, two-thirds of a mile in length, hewn through the rock by Cumae, exists to-day under the title of the Grotta di Pace, and perhaps the line of lagoons north of Cumae may represent the excavations for its bed. But the work was never carried through in the distressful times which followed, and the chief result of the whole plan was a most grievous loss. Above the town of Terracina, which lies on the sea shore steaming under an April sun, rises abruptly a great line of cliff, seamed with olive groves, covered with a chaotic confusion of gigantic rocks, crowned at the crest with the "Palace of Theodoric," a ruin as splendid as it is sore work to scale its hill. Looking east from the height, the traveller gazes down upon the greenest of oval basins, into which streams fall from the protecting semi-circle of hills and meander slowly through vineyards and poplars to the quiet sea. Here in old time was grown on the marshy slopes a famous wine, the Caecuban, one greatly esteemed and of high value. But the canal dealt the unhappy vines more injury than the over-confident carelessness of the vine-dressers. The water may have been drained from them into the channel. Or the hewing of its course may have disturbed them. But whatever the actual damage done, the supply of the wine grew less and less, to the sorrow of the connoisseur. And this alone was the result of the great canal.[1]

Thus Nero essayed his first task of rebuilding after the fire, that of the city. To it he had linked other works for his own and for Italy's good. But men grumbled at the one and mocked the other. They criticised the new city, and declared it less healthy. They recalled the pleasures and the homeliness of the old city which the fire had swept away. They secretly charged Nero with the incendiary's guilt. To rebuild his own name and his popularity was obviously more difficult as soon as the fire ceased than to set up colonnade or palace. The people were angry and dangerously excited. They demanded some scapegoats for their wrath. They required the discovery of the criminals who must have set the city ablaze. Nero must calm their excitement, avert their unjust suspicion from himself, supply them with the criminals and the victims whom they demanded. He set his hand promptly to his second task.

[1] See note at end.

§ 5. The Persecution of the Christians[1]

To ascribe the fire to its real cause, chance, and not to some men's craft, would never appease the mob of Rome. The people when it demands victims will never rest content with explanations. No gifts of Nero, no propitiatory offerings, no lustrations, to Volcanus, to Ceres, to Juno, to Proserpine, no consultation of the Sibylline Books, had any effect in removing their sullen suspicions. Many and deep were the curses heaped on the heads of "those who set fire to the city." It was an ominous anonymity. Prophecies, invented or genuine, were freely quoted, pointing to the "last of Aeneas' descendants" as author of the city's ruin. And after all, *was* the fire the result of chance? Few credited this in Rome, and Nero in like manner may have had suspicions.

There was now in Rome a new religious sect, whom the people nicknamed "Christians" from the object of their devotions, and the sect accepted the appellation. Theirs was a superstition, so much the Romans knew, which had begun some years back in Judaea, that unruly and fanatic province. Thence like every oriental creed it had filtered into Rome, and filtered so rapidly that, though at first confused with the large Jewish colony in the city, men in Claudius' reign had become aware that its devotees were neither only Jews nor primarily Jews, but owned some other curious beliefs and practised strange suspicious rites. In very fact the Jews themselves seemed not to love the Christians. Now this new sect to the Roman view (a view both of the mob, which was always rubbing shoulders with the votaries, and of the aristocracy and government who regarded it from afar off, the first with silent contempt, the second with scrutinising suspicion), this new sect was accurst. Its devotees obviously hated the human race. They shunned its festivals. They cursed its gods. They shared neither its joys nor its sorrows. Their rites were secret. They must therefore be abominable, destructive of all morality and of all virtue, of the family and the Nation. It was an accurst superstition and a maleficent. The human race, represented by the Roman people, retaliated their own hate upon them. To foreign religions of a more comprehensive and cheerful, if no less mysterious a type, Rome had with some grudging opened her arms. Live and let live was a good tolerant motto, and one always dear to the

[1] See note at end.

wise Roman government. But toleration must be reciprocal, or it becomes a farce. Caius may worship Isis, to Lucius' good-humoured amusement, for Lucius adores Cybele. But Caius must be just as good-humouredly amused at Lucius' prayers. And Caius and Lucius together must add their peculiar fancies on to the good old stock Roman religion, or at least worship the great Imperial conception which alone held the Empire together, and adore its expression in the "Divinity of Rome and of Augustus." And Caius and Lucius being easy going polytheists had no objection. Rome and Augustus therefore tolerated complacently Caius' and Lucius' especial divinities, so long as all was open and above board, and there was no lurking hint of political intrigue within and covered by the rites of a religious or fanatical society. Apella the Jew might be less good-humoured indeed to Caius' god and to Lucius' god. But everyone knew him by this time, and he was not openly despiteful. He had struck a bargain with the Emperor, too, who knew all about him. He offered sacrifice to his own peculiar and invisible God on the Emperor's behalf. He had won influence with the Empress even, who was interested in his rites and ceremonies. Apella was no such strange being by now. Caius and Lucius and he lived together comfortably enough.

"But this new sect! There you had a very different matter. Apella for his part cursed it as heartily as Caius or Lucius did. This Christian was enthusiast, low-born, secret, hostile. He must be guilty of the most atrocious crimes, crimes such as men could hardly credit. Why did not the police suppress them? They were growing in numbers fast. They were a peril to Caius, to Lucius, to Apella, to the city, to the Emperor, to the nation, to the whole human race. And their doctrines, who knew them? Fire to destroy the entire world, and their God's wrath to be a destroying vengeance upon the wicked. The 'wicked.' Why, Caius and Lucius were the wicked, they discovered. And as for fire and threats of fire, why, last July ——. It was a damnable, an accurst, an abominable superstition, this of these Christians."

We have endeavoured to depict the state of feeling prevailing in the streets of Rome against the first Christian converts, a feeling shared in a measure by all Romans of high-birth and the Emperor himself. Of its origin, on the question of its justification, we do not here speak. This attitude to the Christians was, in A.D. 64, a fact. And to purge the city from

this religion, regarded as it was as the vilest of Oriental defilements, to rid himself and his subjects from its pollution and hostility, this was a matter for the Emperor as chief magistrate of the State. And Nero, seizing the chance, selected the Christians as scapegoats of the fire. Men in common did as a fact believe that they were guilty of it. They knew Christians who confessed to this incendiary crime, and denounced them promptly. "Correpti qui fatebantur." The confession of guilt *preceded* the denunciation and the trial. The statement is as clear as it is often disregarded. Confession after arrest, perhaps on torture, is one matter. But confession in the streets which leads up to a denunciation, this is another. The incendiary language of the Christian fanatic must have given rise to strange misconceptions and misunderstandings. And though the Roman historian is not deceived, and acquits the victims of the charge of arson, his belief that Nero was similarly not deceived is not so certain a fact. Christ's second advent with its attendant conflagration of heaven and earth was expected quickly, almost daily, by the Christians. The lurid denunciations of the Apocalypse were not already written, but the "apocalyptic spirit was already in the Church."[1] Ignorance, malice, or fear, overhearing such fiery prophecies, what use may they not have made of them when the fire consumed half Rome?[2]

Therefore in August of the year A.D. 64, when some Christians whose words, misinterpreted by ignorance or malice, had caused suspicion, were denounced as the authors of the fire, Nero accepted the opportunity. It was by these Christians' own testimony, whether it were the result of eager enthusiasm, or of unguarded admissions, or of terror and apostasy, that a large number of their fellow-Christians were implicated in the same charge of incendiarism, and arrested. But on examination before the Emperor (for the whole matter was one of a magisterial action alone), this charge broke down, and, at least in many cases, could not be proved. Notwithstanding, they could be and were condemned to death simply as Christians. The confession of the name was enough, for it was held to connote so infamous a reputation that Christians became liable at once to the summary jurisdiction of the executive magistrate, and were classed with robbers, bandits, assassins, and magicians, as liable to execution on the proof of guilt. Under the title were subsumed crimes, in the belief of

[1] Duruy. [2] See note at end.

the Romans, which justified and called imperatively for the extreme penalty from the magistrate. The existence of the Christian was incompatible with the common weal. Unruly fanatics, traitors to the Empire and the Gods, stained with abominable crimes, whose accursed tenets were capturing many proselytes, they were handed over to death, the most of them as Christians, some perhaps as actual incendiaries. And the people for their part, believing firmly that in them the authors of the fire were taken, were prepared to welcome their deaths.

And yet they could not, for cruelty here overshot its mark, and won pity for the guilty and the criminals, as men believed them. Their punishment was too horrible even for Romans. The Christians were regarded much as Thugs or Anarchists by the modern world. But men agreed that Nero handled them too savagely. Mockery was added to torture. Some were clad in wild beasts' skins, and exposed in the amphitheatre to be torn to pieces by the teeth of hounds. Women were made to suffer the penalties and torments which befel the guilty in the old myths, filling the actual rôles, enduring the actual dooms, now suffering the fate of Danaus' guilty daughters, now as Dirce lashed naked to the horns of a raging bull, the spectacle for the excited theatre. But the rest endured the cruellest mockery of suffering. After night-fall, on one summer evening, the Emperor threw open to the people his gardens and his circus in the Vatican, where now St. Peter's stands. Here they found Nero in habit of a charioteer, driving his chariot gallantly, but the course was lit by human torches. The Christians, wrapped each in his "tunic of pain," a garment smeared with oil and wax, were fastened to crosses, and men set light to them, while Nero, as they burned, wandered about among the shuddering crowd, or drove his horses gaily down the illuminated ways.[1]

The Christians were guilty, affirmed the onlookers, and deserved the extremest penalties. And yet pity would spring up, as they gazed, and they forgot to see in the sufferers any but victims done horribly to death to glut one man's savage cruelty, not dying as criminals for the public good. "Oh, the pity of it!" well nigh cries our staid historian, that through the Prince's mere stupidity such wickedness as the Christians' should in this way win sympathy. Guiltless of the fire these Christians really were, in his opinion. Yet they were criminals, and their crimes atrocious. And, by Nero's own

[1] See note at end.

device, they merited and gained pity. Surely the stream of justice was running backwards.

War was declared between the Empire and the Church, war inevitable because the fruit of inevitable misunderstanding on both sides, and not on one alone. This shall be demonstrated later. But for the moment we see nothing but the strife, and hear only the pleading of those who die in anguish, in mockery, in shame. Yet the defeat is the first victory in this warfare, and the Roman dimly apprehends it. "You slay us, and we conquer by your slaying," cried the fierce African.[1] "The cloak of suffering is our robe of victory, the axle, stake, and faggots form our triumphal car." The first page of the "epic of Christian martyrdom"[2] is written at Rome. The epic shall embrace the warfare of more than two hundred and fifty years. Rome shall become the "second holy city"[2] of the new religion. But now on this summer night Christ's Advent of a surety seems sore delayed. Rome and her Empire are powerful and endure. The Christians have joined battle, but their leader tarries. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, these wage the war, and fear not the coming of the great day of His wrath, which shall destroy them which corrupt the earth.

"And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice . . . saying, 'Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.'"

[1] Tertullian, Apol. 50.

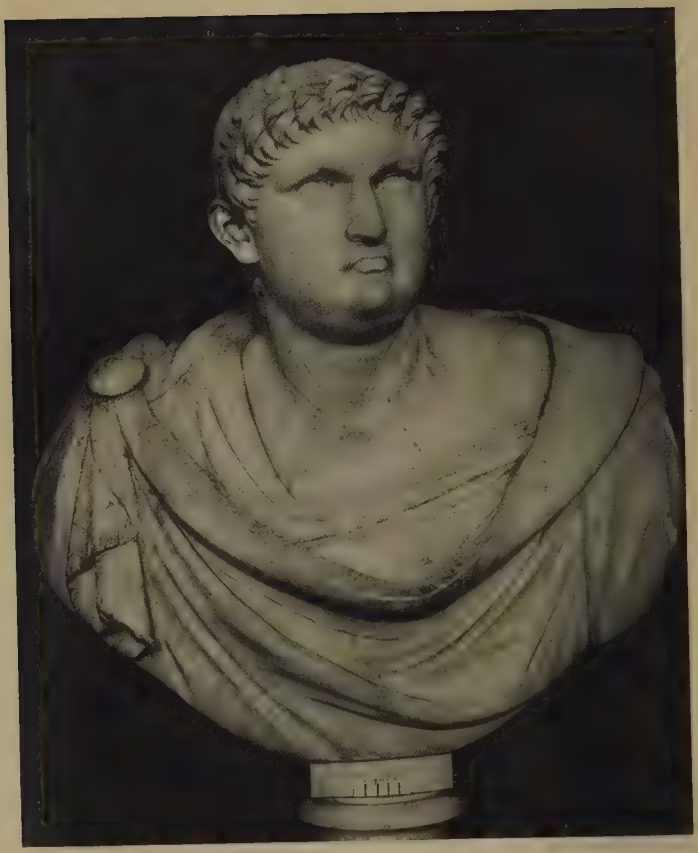
[2] Renan, "L'Antichrist," 174, 177.

CHAPTER VIII

Conspiracy and Retaliation, A.D. 65-66

§ 1. The Conspirators and their Motives.
§ 2. The Conspiracy.
§ 3. Seneca's Last Years.
§ 4. The Death of Seneca.
§ 5. The Terror.
§ 6. Petronius.
§ 7. The Government and the Philosophers.

"There is no sure foundation set on blood,
No certain life achiev'd by others' death."
(Shakespeare, *King John*, iv. 2.)



NERO

FROM A BUST IN THE LOUVRE, PARIS

CHAPTER VIII

§ 1. The Conspirators and their Motives

IT is sometimes charged against the early Emperors as little short of a crime that their position seemed insecure and that more than one died a violent death. But though a long-lived and successful Republic finally perishes of its own inherent defects, the monarchy which follows it is always liable to the peril of conspiracy for the one or two generations which follow the Republic's fall. It is with the quiet handing on of power from prince to prince that the danger seems to grow less and less.

Thus it was with Nero. There were three classes in the Roman State whose temper must always be matter of consideration to the Prince: the troops, the people of the city, and the nobility. The troops seemed always loyal to Nero, both the legions in the provinces and the praetorian guards in the city. The days when each army proclaimed a general supreme, and followed him faithfully to war with a rival, seemed lost in the far past ruin of the Republic. All the armies in the provinces owned the Julian Prince their overlord and Imperator. The guard in Rome, paid highly by the Prince and under his immediate observation, preserved a fidelity on which his life depended. They had placed Claudius on the throne, despite the Nobility. They had joyfully acclaimed Nero's accession. They were the strongest power in the city, and knew their strength. So long as they were loyal (and there seemed no reason for any change) the Prince ran small risk of open riot in the streets against him. The people had always been well disposed to Nero. Their momentary irritation on the score of the fire had been easily diverted on to other victims, and the Emperor found no difficulty in retaining his popularity so long as he gave them food and games enough. The voice of the people in theatre and circus had been a political power in the days of Cicero and Caesar, and even now it caused anxious thought to the

Prince. But the mob knew well its own happiness, and never since the days of Augustus betrayed any inclination for, or a desire for the restoration of, a republican form of government. Nero bore patiently with popular lampoons and offensive anonymous attacks scribbled on the walls of the city. Every prince must be subject to these, and he had wit to see that it was wiser to take no notice. This vulgarity hurt no one, and it was not now from this source that any danger threatened him.

Yet already at the end of A.D. 62 a conspiracy had been set afoot against Nero's life, and it had slowly ripened. The great fire had given to it a lost opportunity, but it had still gained strength thereby. And now in A.D. 65 it came at last to a head, the crisis foretold, as was inevitable, by portents which the chroniclers at once associated with the event, seeking them even in far-off Placentia to sate their readers' credulity. And this conspiracy resembled earlier conspiracies against the Emperors in part, but only in part. The old senatorial nobility could never forgive the rise of one House at the expense of all the rest. And in this circle, too, of the nobility there lingered on that republican sentiment which was long since dead in every other class as a class in Rome, though curious individuals might still pathetically cherish ideas once honoured, now time-worn and happily thrown away.

The strength and extent of republicanism in Rome in the early days of the Empire is easily overrated. Much of the sentiment was mere literary fashion. Cato the impossible became a very demi-god of literature and rhetoric. Polished society consumed vast stores of incense on his altar, and admired the performance artistically and aesthetically. The Emperor looked on smiling. Rhetoric must have some food for its sustenance. Rhetorical training was indispensable for public life in earlier days, and the tradition of its necessity died very hard. Its themes were always trite, trite as the Oxford declamations of the eighteenth century. Hannibal could not be left in his grave in peace. But a more promising subject even than the Punic warrior was supplied by the old worn but ever green theme of Tyrannicide. To hymn ornately the praises of the murderers of Tyrants might at first sight seem a playing with fire for the Roman youth under the Imperial sway, but the Emperors of the Julian House regarded it with studied nonchalance, a nonchalance

which the modern German cannot understand. Tyrannicide was but a theme of the Schools, and the thesis issued not so readily in action with the somewhat weary Roman as with the excitable Tuscan patriot, himself scarcely self-deluded. Tyrannicide was truly a glorious deed, on paper. Patriots and poets killed their victims amid loud applause in the theatre and lecture room. It was in Florence, Florence the impetuous, so easily misled, that "the court-fool's bauble concealed the patriot's knife."[1] In Imperial Rome the schoolboy's foolish stilus made open "patriotic" flourish, and, unless it were the schoolboy, no one was any the worse. These were the "false threnodists of false liberty," the "hollow chanters over the ashes of a hollow Republic."[2] The Roman for the most part was gifted with sturdy common sense in actual life if not in his principles of higher education. Those who held the republican creed which they chanted as more than a pose were few; those who proposed to put their creed into practice and emulate the self-advertisement of a Brutus were fewer still and of very little influence. The writer Cremutius Cordus indeed in Tiberius' opinion had published too openly his vigorous laudations of Brutus and of Cassius, and on accusation in the Senate he committed suicide, and his books were burnt. It was an untimely severity and quickly abandoned. Seneca under Claudius could freely praise Cremutius' daughter Marcia, who had preserved her father's books and worshipped his memory. He could cry aloud in his Tragedy the motto of the tyrant-slayer:

> "Victima haud ulla amplior
> Potest magisque opima mactari Jovi
> Quam rex iniquus."

He could under Nero pour out panegyric after panegyric on the exiles of the Pompeian party, and adore his supreme Stoic hero Cato. "Cato lived not after Liberty was slain, and Liberty perished at his death." Caesar could be handled with grave disdain or affected pity. It was all pretty folly.

Republican sentiment was never an open danger to the Empire. It was, and with good reason, too unpopular alike with army, populace, and provinces. The senatorial irreconcilables cherished it still. They had hopes of it on Caligula's assassination, hopes rudely crushed in a moment

[1] J. A. Symonds. [2] De Quincey.

by the guards. Camillus, governor of Dalmatia in 42, had offered "liberty" to his troops, and implored them to march to restore the Republic. They mocked and deserted, and Camillus slew himself. The sentiment was but a respectable and a languid anachronism. The utmost it could achieve was to supply a handful of active conspirators, who relied on secret assassination, not upon popular or military enthusiasm. And in their folly these failed to understand that the dream of Respublica Rediviva issued now only from the ivory gate; that the murder of *an* Emperor could never mean the destruction of *the* Emperor; that they sacrificed their enthusiasms and their lives to gain but a change of the ruler's person. If Seneca could chide Brutus the tyrannicide for this blindness of vision, it is because he had a century's experience to give him insight. For Cicero and his party there might seem a chance of victory in a not ignoble struggle, and we dare not withhold our admiration from their battling. But how can history laud the pseudo-Catos of the Neronian era? They grasped at golden fruit and found that it was dust and had been dust for the past fifty years. Is history to be entirely useless in the education of the world because of Ignorance' power?[1]

The names of forty-one actual or supposed members of the "Pisonian" conspiracy against Nero are known. Analysis shows that a very small minority of these, so far as can be affirmed with certainty, were inspired with genuine "love of the Republic." The majority professed rather indignation and horror at Nero's crimes, some doubtless with a real, some with a feigned, abhorrence. But most were ready with another candidate to take Nero's place as Emperor, though they were not agreed as to who this should be. Such a conspiracy, in fact, bands together men of very different aims, motives, and characters. Republican enthusiasts worked side by side with Imperialists who desired to secure the power to an intimate friend; honest moralists with dissolute scapegraces; soldiers, senators, knights, and women, all joined hands in the plot to destroy Nero. Upon its success, then would come the dissension and the fighting of each party for its rival candidate or opposite aim. And, like most secret plots of assassination, it came very near success without attaining it.

Among the more honest of the conspirators Plautius

[1] See note at end.

Lateranus, consul designate, ranks high. His at least was a genuine Republican enthusiasm, however obsolete. Nero had done him no hurt, despite his wealth and his palace on the Caelian hill, and he imperilled these of conviction, a conviction as foolish as many honest convictions, and therefore all the more dangerous. Epicharis, the heroine of the story, shared his love for the days and the constitution of the past. A dangerous little knot of conspirators was formed within the praetorian guard itself, and was headed by no less a person than one of its two prefects, Faenius Rufus. The prefect's motives were mainly personal. He hated his over-successful fellow prefect Tigellinus, who possessed great influence with Nero, while he, Rufus, had little, and that little had so kindled Tigellinus' jealousy of him that he went in danger of his life.

Terrified and angry, he threw himself heart and soul into the plot. Of the subordinates in the Guard who shared the secret, two at least were blunt and honest soldiers, who were actuated mainly by dislike and scorn of their chief's excesses and pursuits. These were Subrius Flavus, Tribune of the Guard, and Sulpicius Asper, centurion. Two other tribunes and two more centurions completed Rufus' party in the Guard, one of whom at least, Gavius Silvanus the tribune, had served with distinction in Britain under Claudius. But apart from soldiers and republicans, numbering a bare half of those who were indisputably guilty, the rest were mostly a sorry crew and impelled by sorry motives. The head of the conspiracy itself, or at least the conspirator from whom it took its name, and the most dangerous candidate for Nero's place, was one C. Calpurnius Piso. He belonged to one of the oldest and noblest of Roman families, a family so noble that its head did it no dishonour in taking to himself as second wife a lady whose fair beauty scarcely concealed her humble birth. He himself was now a man of middle age, tall, handsome, courtly, generous, the darling of the mob for his magnificence and splendid oratory, while the looseness of his life harmed him not at all in their estimation, however much it sapped his own vigour and contributed to his fall. Though he had won no laurels in war, yet it was his boast to have saved many a citizen's life in the less dangerous contests of the law courts. His house became a centre for the fashionable youth of Rome, and himself a Maecenas in Nero's Court, patron of poets and budding orators. Yet for

all his graces he ruined the conspiracy by weakness and entire lack of resolution and of daring at the critical moment. His position and notoriety had caused the more determined plotters to push him into the dangerous position of chief conspirator, a position which he occupied rather against his will than of any impelling ambition of his own. It had been better for all concerned had the chosen leader been left to his chess-playing, nor had been incited to play the more perilous game wherein men's lives were the pawns. Piso's hopes were shared by the companions and friends of his idle and luxurious hours, Flavius Scaevinus and Antonius Natalis. Others were impelled by the mere restless hope of landing some prize by fishing in troubled waters. Their names, their desires, their ends, are alike ignoble and insignificant. Afranius Quintianus, an effeminate senator, judged this the suitable revenge for Nero's poetic wit, which had been exercised at his expense. Claudius Senecio, son of a freedman, played a dangerous double game for no certainly ascertained motive. Once boon comrade with Otho and the Emperor in the intrigue with the girl Acte, he still preserved his familiarity with Nero, and hid his treachery beneath the guise of friendship. But two names remain, of greater interest. The discussion of Seneca's supposed part in the conspiracy may be postponed. He took no active part at least. Yet the soldiers among the plotters, despising Piso, seem to have made the old philosopher their choice as Nero's successor. And his nephew, the poet Lucan, was from the first deeply involved in the whole scheme. The poet's relations to the Emperor merit a somewhat more detailed account, although as a conspirator he proved himself a contemptible craven.[1]

M. Annaeus Lucanus, son of Seneca's younger brother Mela and Acilia his wife, was born on November the third, A.D. 39, and was thus not quite two years younger than Nero. Educated in Rome by Cornutus the philosopher, he had gone to Athens for his literary studies. But his growing fame as a poet seems to have attracted the poet-Emperor's attention, and Nero, recalling him to Rome, bestowed the quaestorship and augurship upon him, and enlisted him in his "Cohort of Friends." Lucan gratefully repaid these kindnesses by an early poem in praise of the Emperor, and by reciting his panegyric at the Neronian Festival of the year

[1] See note at end.

A.D. 60. Shortly afterwards the first three books of his great poem the Pharsalia were published. The first book contained, despite its republican flavour and atmosphere (this was inherent in the subject), the most extravagant praise of his patron and friend. All the evils of the Civil Wars were tolerable, declares the poet, if the Fates could find no other way for Nero's coming.

> Iam nihil, O superi, querimur : scelera ipsa nefasque
> Hac mercede placent.

As grateful Rhodes had hailed the young Imperial pleader its very Sun-God, so Lucan hails his ascension among the Deities of Heaven.

> "And yet the Northern or the Southern pole,
> We pray thee, choose not ; but in rays direct
> Vouchsafe thy radiance to thy city Rome.
> Press thou on either side, the Universe
> Should lose its equipoise : take thou the midst,
> And weight the scales, and let that part of Heaven
> Where Caesar sits, be evermore serene,
> And smile upon us with unclouded blue." [1]

No objection of course can be taken to the extravagance, save for the hideous lack of poetic feeling in the whole conception. As the English writer justly observes, the Imperial power and sanctity are "vulgarised by this coarse translation into the region of physics." [2] As Zurbaran to Mantegna, so is the Cordovan to the poet of Mantua. But the intention was excellent. Nero, continues the poet, shall usher in the reign of universal peace :

> "Then may all men lay down their arms, and peace
> Through all the nations reign, and shut the gates
> That close the Temple of the God of War."

So let the Emperor be propitious to the poet :

> "Be thou my help, to me e'en now divine !
> Let Delphi's steep her own Apollo guard,
> And Nysa keep her Bacchus uninvoked !
> Rome is my subject, and my Muse art thou." [3]

There is no trace of irony in Lucan's enthusiastic verse. Nero is to his poetic soul divine. And though his heroes are those of the Republic, yet in these earlier books he ventures no direct criticism of his own upon the Empire.

But there followed a change. Nero and Lucan quarrelled.

[1] Ridley's Trans. [2] De Quincey. [3] Phars. i. v. 33 *sqq.* Ridley's Trans.

The Emperor was jealous of the younger poet's growing fame and greater popularity. Even, it is said, the obsequious mob awarded the actor's wreath to Lucan's Orpheus over Nero's Niobe. Lucan too, for his part, angered by the Imperial jealousy, with the indiscretion of a poet buoyed up upon popular applause and the passion of a fiery youth, retaliated by mockery and poetic ridicule of the Emperor and his friends. Then Nero forbade him to publish verse at all.

The later books of the Pharsalia are brimful of the angry poet's hatred of the Empire, of the longing for the Republic and its heroes. The loss of liberty is his theme. The poet is Republican now, and in accord with his subject. His own generation seemed to him hopelessly condemned to slavery. Cato stands out as hero of the unpublished poem, Cato the inevitable, the happily inimitable, the "Republican of Iron."[1]

> "Rome, in him behold
> His Country's Father, worthiest of thy vows;
> A name by which men shall not blush to swear;
> Whom, shouldst thou break the fetters from thy neck,
> Thou mayst in distant days decree divine."[2]

The taunt is magnificently hurled at Nero, Nero the "Father of his Country," to whose Genius men offered sacrifice. His career spoiled, his poetry proscribed, his rushing torrent of poetic rhetoric condemned to underground channels, Lucan threw himself with "quick hatred" into the plot to murder his former patron and too jealous rival. Poetic and political sentiment joined hands. Wounded vanity and insulted ambition dragged the poet of twenty-five down the slippery hill of conspiracy to death.

> "Sic et tu (rabidi nefas tyranni)
> Iussus praecipitem subire Lethen,
> Dum pugnas canis arduaque voce
> Das solacia grandibus sepulchris,
> (O dirum scelus, O scelus!) tacebis."[3]

True representative of that rhetorical magniloquent age in poetry as was Seneca in prose, Lucan died young, yet hardly prematurely. His life's work was done when the Pharsalia was written. The world could spare another.

[1] Tria. *op. cit.* p. 28. [2] Phars. ix. 601-4, Ridley's Trans.
[3] Statius, Geneth. Lucani, 99-104.

The poet chose the path to ruin, a path surely entangled with the briars of terror, treachery, and cold dishonour.[1]

It was thus a motley band, this company of conspirators, and in this its composite character lay the chief danger to the Emperor. There is little doubt that Nero was aghast when upon the detection of the plot he discovered that disaffection, so far from being limited to the Senatorial nobility, his natural enemies, had spread to the Equites, whence his own civil service was largely recruited, and to his own Imperial bodyguard. Even the nobility had no real reason to plot against him. His predecessor Claudius, as has been seen, had waged bitter war with the Senatorial class, and incurred as bitter a detestation for it. Analysis, however, of the trials in which members of this class were concerned up to this year A.D. 65, and their results, makes a startling contrast visible between Nero and Claudius. Apart from the accusations for provincial maladministration, which only reflect credit on the government, and apart from the deaths of members of the Imperial House itself, which did not concern the nobility, however regrettable, indefensible, murderous, or inevitable in themselves, not one solitary death sentence is recorded in the ten years of Nero's government, and only two sentences of banishment for treason and for libel on the Emperor were passed on the offenders Antistius and Veiento. For the rest, seven senators and knights had been condemned on one and the same accusation, for forgery, and their guilt was manifest. Two accusations of treason, the only other treason cases, ended in acquittal and the exile of the accuser. We hold, as historian, no brief of any kind for Nero. But we are bold to maintain that, with the exception of the two classes of cases mentioned above, few trials and far fewer condemnations sully the ten years of Nero's principate up to the detection of the conspiracy; that the early promise of mercy had been amply fulfilled; that the Senatorial nobility had not suffered at Nero's hands, and were not likely to suffer at Nero's hands, any injustice or oppression or peril of their life. We insist strongly upon these facts. We infer that the nobility had no reason resident in fear for their own lives to join in the secret plot against the Emperor. We scrutinize the conspirators' names and their motives. We find little that is honourable, much that is degrading, nothing that is wise, everything that is insensate. We con-

[1] See note at end.

template the terrible results of the conspiracy, results of its failure that might have been foreseen, probable results of its success that were not anticipated and happily not fulfilled. And our sympathies, we confess, are not, and can never be, with the plotter crew.[1]

The list of dramatis personæ is complete. The curtain may rise and the actors play their parts in the tragedy.

§ 2. The Conspiracy

By April of the year 65 A.D. the plot had been dragging on for many months. At least two opportunities of secretly assassinating Nero had been let slip. The more companions the confederates sought to entice into their design, the less likely was any one of them to undertake the whole responsibility, and the greater was the risk of detection. Yet chances to slay Nero were not very easily found by those who exercised a prudent forethought for their own safety.

It was a woman's indiscretion which brought matters to a crisis. Among the nervous and self-seeking she was fired by a genuine indignation, and was resolute to enlist others in the cause. Epicharis, Mela's mistress, while staying in Campania discovered that a ship's captain of her acquaintance belonging to the Misenum fleet, Volusius Proculus by name, was full of his grievances against the Emperor. He had been of service on the night of Agrippina's murder, and had not received the rewards which he held that he thereby had earned. As he poured out his complaints before her, Epicharis decided to trust him. It was important to gain accomplices in the Campanian fleet, as Nero's love of the Bay of Naples might give many chances of attack if the conspirators had friends in the navy. She therefore disclosed to Proculus the existence and the object of the plot, appealing to his love of country and of rewards. But she hid from him the names of the conspirators.

In this she was wise, for she had trusted her man too lightly. The captain hurried with his information to the Emperor, and Epicharis was at once arrested. Such haste defeated its own object. The informer had no witnesses, and Epicharis, calmly denying every word of his, frustrated and baffled him. She was detained, but the plot, though in danger, remained undiscovered.

But it was time now to hasten. The first plan of the con-

[1] See note at end.

spirators was to assassinate Nero at Piso's villa at Baiae, whither he often came to bathe and to feast unattended by any guard. But Piso refused to admit this scheme, and it was abandoned. The breach of hospitality would be too horrible, and would certainly alienate popular goodwill. There was still surviving one of the Junii Silani, young Lucius, son of Agrippina's victim Marcus, who, as descendant of Augustus, had far better title to succeed Nero than any Piso. To one whose desire was not to destroy the Emperor unless he himself could win his place, it was important not to wound popular sympathy by the very circumstances of the assassination. The consul also, M. Vestinus Atticus, was a man who could not be disregarded. He was not in the plot, although a bête noire of Nero's. But some of the conspirators hated him, and others feared his recklessness. His suspected republican tendencies might not relish a mere change of masters, and he was far too keen-witted not to see at a glance through the thin pretence of spurious patriotism. A murder at Baiae would give Vestinus time to act, perhaps to proclaim the republic, or to put a nominee of his own in Nero's place. He might bribe the guards. No one knew what he would or would not do. The deed must be done in Rome, ostensibly as an open act of public vengeance:

> "This shall make
> Our purpose necessary and not envious;
> Which so appearing to the common eyes,
> We shall be call'd purgers, not murderers."

In reality only by this means could Piso be placed firmly in possession of the Imperial power.

It was therefore decided to take advantage of Nero's presence at the games held in honour of Ceres in the newly restored Circus Maximus in the middle of the month of April. The Emperor was certain to attend, and his delight in such shows made him easy of access. The plan closely followed the model set by the murderers of Julius Caesar. Lateranus, being a man of iron nerve and great strength, was to cast himself at Nero's feet as if petitioning him to relieve his poverty, and so to clasp and hurl him to the ground, whereupon the soldiers and anyone else "who had pluck enough" were to run up and despatch him. Scaevinus eagerly claimed the honour of dealing the first blow. Meanwhile Piso was to wait hard by in Ceres' Temple, whence, the deed accomplished, Rufus the prefect would hurry him

to the camp to receive the homage of the Praetorians. It was said also that Claudius' daughter by Aelia Paetina and his last surviving child, Antonia, was to accompany Piso thither, so great an influence was the hereditary idea. The Roman historian can hardly believe this tale of the contemporary Pliny, as "what," he asks, "could induce Antonia to run this so great risk?" Moreover, Piso was very fond of his beautiful wife, Atria Galla. But, he adds, the passion for Empire is after all the strongest. The most useful pawn must be pushed forward to become Queen, even though this involve the sacrifice of another which has been the player's chief delight.

The plan was not unpromising. Rarely indeed has a plot so long matured and shared by so many come so near execution. But the ship of their hopes shipwrecked in harbour on the rocks of Scaevinus' nervousness and Piso's indecision.

For Scaevinus, who had claimed a leading part, must needs enact a dress rehearsal of it, with the lamentable result that the first night's performance was stopped. His nerves, weakened probably by his earlier life of dissolute indolence, now that he was called upon to act strenuously and silently, played him false. He could not conceal his excitement. He must needs parade the dagger consecrated to the holy task. The day before the attempt was to be made he closeted himself with Natalis for many hours, and then hastened back home to execute his will and seal it before witnesses. He handed over his dagger to a freedman of his named Milichus to have it sharpened to a keen bright point, complaining that it was blunt. Then he went to dinner, and dined more sumptuously than was his wont. At dinner he bestowed freedom on his favourite slaves and gifts of money on others. His feigned mirth was obviously hollow; his talk disjointed, and interrupted by fits of gloom and deep anxious thought. To fill up the measure of his folly he commanded Milichus to prepare lint and bandages. It was obvious to the freedman that some mischief was afoot.

Some afterwards asserted that Milichus' suspicions were only then aroused. Others declared that he had long been in the secret. If so, exasperation at his master's nervous folly may have driven him to save his own life by being first to denounce his guilt. For, as the freedman's wife very pertinently observed to him, he was not the only man to see Scaevinus' nervousness. The only question was, "who should be the first to carry the news to Nero?"

With the first glint of daylight Milichus was knocking at the entrance to the Servilian gardens and clamouring for admission to the Emperor, since he brought terrible tidings. The janitor took him to Epaphroditus, one of Nero's freedmen, who hurried with him to Nero. To him Milichus poured forth the whole story of what he had seen, what he knew, what he suspected. Scaevinus was at once seized and confronted with his freedman. But, as often happens, the man restless in the anticipation of peril displayed confidence and assurance in its actual presence. For every point in Milichus' tale he had a plausible explanation ready. Nero was puzzled. Not even now on the very morning of the chosen day was the plot beyond hope of success, though it trembled upon the very precipice edge of detection.

A woman's wit gave it its thrust into the abyss. As Milichus stood perplexed and dismayed at the precise refutation of every one of his charges, his wife came to the rescue. She reminded him of Scaevinus' long interview with Natalis the day before. Both, she suggested, were close friends of Piso. Now it was notorious that for some time past Piso had been the object of some suspicion at Court. The hint was a lucky one. Natalis was summoned. He and Scaevinus were separately questioned as to the subject of their conversation on the day before. They failed, not unnaturally, to invent the same lie. They were instantly seized, fettered, and threatened with torture.

The threat was enough. "Voilà le grand courage de ces fiers républicains!" cries the indignant Frenchman.[1] They were not Republicans these two, but certainly they were not courageous. Natalis gave way first. He confessed the conspiracy, implicated Piso, and accused Seneca as well; "either because Seneca was actually guilty or because Natalis sought to curry favour with Nero who was seeking every opportunity to destroy Seneca." Scaevinus, informed of Natalis' admissions, followed suit at once. He had a more meagre knowledge of details and less ingenuity in accusation. But he gave a full and complete list of all the conspirators whom he knew. Three of these, Quintianus, Senecio and Lucan, persisted for some time in their asseverations of innocence. But on a promise of pardon they hastened to atone and to account for their delay by accusing, the first named their chief friends, the poet his own mother Acilia. Truly theirs

[1] Duruy.

had been a fine and an honourable reluctance, and deserving that Nero should break his promise to them of his pardon.[1]

A woman's heroic endurance puts senator, knight and poet to shame with a shame unspeakable. At this point Nero suddenly remembered Proculus' former story and his silent prisoner Epicharis. She was at once put to the torture. For one whole day the fiercest torment of lash and fire, applied by torturers enraged by a woman's obstinacy, extorted from her no single word of confession, no mention of another's name. Dragged back next day in a chair to fresh torture (for with dislocated limbs she could not stand), she stripped a scarf which she was wearing from her breast, tied it noose-wise to the chair's curving back, and strangling herself died with her secret safe, so far as it rested in her keeping. This was a freedwoman's faith, a freedwoman's endurance. Had the men deserved this honour at her hands?

Nero's alarm was justifiably great. He had been saved within a few hours of assassination. He surrounded himself with troops. Bands of horse and foot patrolled the panic-stricken city, watched the river and guarded all the roads to the sea or to the country. Many arrests were made and fear found ground for suspicion in any chance word or smile. The chief conspirators lost all heart at once. Faenius Rufus hoped to escape by a violence in cross-examination of the accused which was equal to Nero's and Tigellinus' own. Subrius Flavus had his hand upon his sword hilt as he stood on guard during Nero's examination of the prisoners, and waited but a nod from Rufus to fall even then upon the Emperor. But Rufus checked him. His was a hope of escape as idle as it was cowardly. His fellow conspirators turned with one accord upon their guilty judge. "No one," said Scaevinus blandly to his browbeating, "knew more of the whole affair than he himself." His stammering confusion revealed the truth. Cassius, a soldier of huge stature, caught and bound the prefect at Nero's bidding, and he died leaving a will behind him full of lamentation. Piso, conspirator in chief, collapsed at the imminent danger like a pricked balloon. In vain it was urged upon him to strike one blow for his and all their lives at this last extremity, to show himself in very deed worthy of his lineage, to appeal to the people and the troops before his executioners arrived. Better to die so than in miserable dishonour. Truly it was a counsel of despera-

[1] See note at end.

tion. The attempt at open defiance in the streets of Rome might have terrified "Nero the play-actor, Tigellinus and his troop of harlots." But Piso would not hear of it. The game was lost. The would-be Emperor shut himself up in his house, wrote a will of fawning adulation of Nero, if so be he might even yet save his wife from the Imperial vengeance, and waited. Presently there arrived a company of recruits (Nero did not trust his veterans). Piso had an artery cut and perished peaceably like a well-fed sheep. So Piso died.

Some, however, and not only those who had entered the conspiracy for motives other than personal gain and advancement, displayed genuine courage and sangfroid. Plautius Lateranus was ordered to instant execution, being refused both time to bid his children farewell and leave to choose his own manner of death, which was not an infrequent boon. He was taken to a spot set aside for the punishment of the slaves, and Statius, tribune of the guard, an undiscovered conspirator, smote him with the sword. Wounded and shaken only by the first blow, he calmly took his place again and awaited the last stroke undismayed. So Lateranus died silently, not casting in the tribune's teeth his own complicity in the plot. The subalterns of the guard also showed a contempt for death not exhibited by their prefect and commanding officer. Subrius Flavus first mocked the idea that he, a soldier, could ever have been complot with a crowd of effeminate civilians. Then, further pressed, he desisted from his raillery and gloried in his guilt. "I hated you," he cried to the astonished and confounded Emperor. "Yet for a while, so long as you deserved it, there was none of your soldiers more faithful. Parricide, slayer of mother and of wife, jockey, play-actor, incendiary, it is for this I hate you." Haled away to death he saw the open new made grave before his eyes and reproached the troops who dug it; "since," said he, "it is not made according to army regulations." The military tribune urged him to stretch out his neck bravely for the sword blow. "Only do you strike as bravely," he replied, and died like a soldier. His comrade Sulpicius Asper was a man of few words. "Why," asked Nero, "did he plot the murder?" "No help otherwise for your crimes," he answered briefly, and perished. Even Lucan, when all hope of life was past, played the man. As his blood ebbed slowly away from the severed veins, he recited with unfaltering composure verses of his own which portrayed the wounded soldier

dying by just such a death. And Senecio, Quintianus, Scaevinus, all encountered death in such wise that those who had known the irresolution and effeminacy of their lives wondered.

The fate of Vestinus the consul was harder as it was undeserved. His republicanism may have excited Nero's attention, but Roman society had a sufficient explanation ready in the fact that he had recently married Nero's new favourite Statilia Messalina. The consul was entertaining a large company at dinner in his house, which hung over the forum like a second citadel, when soldiers forced their way in upon the banquet and summoned him. He hastened to an inner room, called his physician and died in the usual manner with undaunted serenity. The agony of fear was felt by his guests, who were kept at his table till the night was far advanced, expecting every moment a sentence of doom. At last Nero let them go, declaring sardonically they had by then paid enough even for a consular feast.

The punishment of the minor conspirators was various. Some committed suicide after pardon; some, supposed innocent, such as Caesennius Maximus, Seneca's friend, Scaevinus' wife Caedicia, and Rufrius Crispinus, Poppaea's former husband, were exiled; some were deprived of their rank. Antonia was put to death some months later. Her guilt remains doubtful. But the tale that her refusal of Nero's hand in marriage after Poppaea's death brought her fate upon her is improbable. Natalis and Proculus were pardoned, as they had given early information and been useful. Milichus was enriched, and awarded the title of "Saviour." Lucan's accusation of his mother was contemptuously ignored.[1]

The conspirators were all tried and condemned by the Emperor himself in his private court, and not by or in the Senate. Subsequently he published the entire evidence and the confessions of the accused. This publication, designed to quell sinister rumours, compelled entire belief at least in the reality and formidable nature of the plot, and this belief was confirmed by the testimony of the exiles who returned to Rome after Nero's death. It is evident that all these exiles were not as innocent as our historian depicts them. There was, indeed, great cause to Nero for joy at his escape, for the large donatives which he bestowed upon the guards,

[1] See note at end.

for the praises and rewards which he lavished upon Tigellinus, upon Nerva the future Emperor, then praetor designate, and upon others who had with them helped him in his hour of danger. One of these, Nymphidius Sabinus, son of a freedwoman and a gladiator, who boasted himself later, at his mother's expense, Caligula's son, was appointed to fill Rufus' place as Praetorian Prefect. Later he too proved a traitor to the Emperor.

The Senate passed numerous votes of flattery, reward, and congratulation. The month of April was henceforward to be called Neroneus. The Gods received due thankofferings, and Scaevinus' dagger was consecrated on the Capitol to Jove the Avenger. But a proposal made by the consul elect, Cerialis Anicius, to erect at the public cost a temple to "The Divine Nero" was forbidden by the Emperor. In this he was true to the tradition and memory of Augustus and Tiberius, which forbade the Emperor's acceptance of worship in his lifetime in Rome itself. Such worship might be permitted to Oriental servility in the Asiatic provinces, and even to Greek adulation in Italy itself. But to the Roman in the city it was forbidden. "Non expedit." The true Caesar worship was adoration of an Idea, not of an Individual.

Thus, amid excitement and anguish, flattery and death in many shapes, the Pisonian Conspiracy passed away into the limbo of misbegotten follies. The evils which it had conducted in its train, the mischief which it left behind it, the sorrow, suffering, and terror which it caused, these were no slight woes. The temporary measures of repression and of punishment were indeed grossly exaggerated. Rome did *not* become an earlier Paris of the democratic rule of Tumbril and of Guillotine. When the picture is presented to us of Rome's streets crowded with funeral processions and pathetic scenes of universal mourning, we know it to be the false and lying product of artistic effort or vindictive scandal, published to please the appetitive taste for horrors, which believed that Nero gave his living victims to an Egyptian "polyphagist" to be eaten by him raw. On exposure to the calm and steady light of fact such impressions fade away. Forty-one persons in all were implicated—nineteen senators, seven knights, eleven soldiers, and four women. Of these, twenty were certainly guilty, and nineteen, mostly senators, are said to have been innocent. But this is doubtful, as *all* the exiles

cannot have been guiltless. The guilt of Seneca and of Antonia remains in some, though not in very great, doubt. Of the twenty certainly guilty, sixteen suffered death, and four were pardoned or acquitted. Only one certainly innocent person, Vestinus the consul, was slain, while four escaped. If two of them committed suicide afterwards, this was not Nero's fault at any rate. Those who perhaps were innocent were exiled or degraded. There was no mystery or concealment made about the evidence upon which every one was condemned by the Emperor.[1]

It is a calm analysis such as this which history claims, and not the excited rhetoric of a sentimentalist. Even if it be contended that Nero's life was certainly not worth the price of Vestinus' and of any other unrighteous sentences of exile or degradation (the guilty brought their fate upon their own heads), yet the peace of the Empire was undoubtedly worth even this price.

The main object of the conspiracy had been to substitute an indolent and vicious epicure for the last Prince, however unworthy, of the Julian House. Under this Prince, however dissolute, the Empire was enjoying peace, good government, and prosperity undisturbed. Under this Prince, however wanton, frontiers had been safeguarded and advanced; justice had been administered to every class of the Empire's subjects. Had the conspiracy succeeded, would the provinces, the armies, the nobility themselves, Otho in Spain, Corbulo in Syria, Verginius in Germany—would these quietly have accepted the rule of the arch-conspirator, of a Piso?

The conspiracy failed miserably and deservedly. Success would not have justified it. By failure it initiated a reign of terror in place of a reign of quiet and of mercy. Nero cannot forget. His whole attitude to the unhappy Senators is changed. The conspiracy from first to last was a criminal mistake. The conspirators merit neither applause nor commiseration.

§ 3. Seneca's Last Years

Was Seneca himself one of the conspirators? The question remains matter for controversy and grave dispute.

It has been seen how that, on the death of Burrus, the

[1] See note at end.

philosopher had begged Nero to allow him to retire from state cares, and Nero had refused to let him go, saying that he could not be spared. And for some little time, though ever withdrawing more and more from public notice, he had stayed at Nero's side. A tale was told, doubtless by an admirer of the Stoic Thrasea, and not improbably invented by such an one, that Seneca in A.D. 63 had congratulated the Emperor on his reconciliation with the Stoic, saying that Nero would gain more thereby than Thrasea himself. Couched even in more guarded language, the tale remains a crude and an improbable one. But it serves to prove that Seneca in this year is still at Court. But after the great fire Seneca contributed a large part of his wealth to the rebuilding of the city, and thereby purchased all his time for his own use. Nero had thought of sending him to Greece statue-hunting, but he declined the journey on the plea of ill-health and neuralgia. When detained in Rome he withdrew to the privacy of his own room. But his letters to his friend Lucilius show him not seldom in Campania or visiting his country estates nearer Rome. For many months his literary studies had engrossed him, and to them now he could devote an untrammelled leisure, unless his vineyards or his study of nature and the heavens called him from writing-desk into the open air and quiet country. Such studies and pursuits were now his great delight. He had cast away the burden of politics. Nature called him. Philosophy claimed him. With joy he combined the two, and in the evening of his life wrote seven books entitled "Natural Questions," wherein the study of natural phenomena is linked inseparably with the formularies of ethics. Theories of meteors and rainbows hobnob with an onslaught on luxury; of air and lightning with the more opposite exhortation against the dread of lightning's power. The waters of the Nile, the snow and hail of winter, earn a sermon upon flattery and pride. Winds suggest man's abuse of God's gifts, earthquakes his fear of death, comets the degeneracy of the age. The preacher appends his sermon to the scientist's engrossed study of natural causes. That study, cried Seneca, was inexhaustible. "We believe ourselves within Nature's Temple, and but linger in the vestibule." We can but travel a little along the road by which those in the centuries to come will advance nearer to the goal. Yet "he contributes most towards discovery who never wavers in his faith that discovery is pos-

sible."[1] So for a year or more he gave himself up with joy to the study of nature, always from the ethical and utilitarian standpoint. On this he is ever insisting. He never ceases to be the moral philosopher in his attitude towards all learning. Knowledge for mere sake of knowledge he heartily condemns. "Does the grammarian's study of language, do his laws of metre, overcome fear, destroy desire, or check lust? Why enquire if Penelope were chaste or not? Rather instruct me in the good of chastity. Why ask if Ulysses were stormtossed between Italy and Sicily, or rather driven beyond the confines of our world? The tempests of our soul toss us daily and wickedness drives us into all Ulysses' ills. The musician argues the laws of the harmony of sound. Can he teach me how the soul may abide in harmony with itself? The geometer teaches the measurement of large estates. What profit is it to know how I may divide my property, when I know not how to divide it with a brother? O egregiam artem! There is nothing, friend, which falls not within the compass of your measure? Come then, measure for me the human soul! Know you the movements of the stars, and draw you presages from their conjunctions? What profits it? Know you how to curb a horse? See, your uncurbed passions hurry you, unwilling captive, away! I advise not that liberal studies may be neglected. Without them we may scarce arrive at virtue. They prepare the mind for its reception. But men waste time upon them, time sorely needed for virtue's acquisition. Didymus the grammarian wrote four thousand books, 'On the Birthplace of Homer,' 'On Æneas' Mother,' 'On Anacreon's Morals,' and such like. And then you complain life is not long enough! Neither is philosophy exempt from blame. Much of it is useless, much superfluous. Philosophers degrade themselves to discuss the meaning of the copula, to ape the grammarian's, the geometrician's, part. All their discussion on the possibility of knowledge—come, hurl it me into the rubbish heap of the superfluous. Some offer me a knowledge of no use at all; others take from me the hope of knowledge altogether. Protagoras adviseth me that naught exists save what is doubtful; Nausiphanes that one fact alone is certain, that of all things' uncertainty; Parmenides that naught but the One exists; Zeno that not this One besides. What then *are* we? What is this that surrounds

[1] See note at end.

us, feeds us, nourishes us? 'The whole nature of things is a shadow or empty or delusive?' I know not whether of the twain causeth me greater anger, he who will have it that I know naught at all or he who leaveth me not even this one certitude that I know naught."[1]

His study of nature and her powers ended, Seneca turned with unstinted energy to these topics which lay nearest his heart. Philosophy to the Roman tended ever to mean Moral Philosophy, just as to-day Metaphysics, Logic and Psychology quarrel for the possession of its tenement, and the science of morals stands shivering in the snow outside till religion proffers to her a shelter. Seneca's latest writings are his series of 124 "Letters to Lucilius," all written towards his life's close during these untroubled years of peace and retirement, and with increasing frequency towards the end. The title "Letters" is almost a misnomer. Sermons or Moral Essays would be a more befitting title, though they take an epistolary shape. But the human or personal element scarcely ever appears, and the order alike of thought and of arrangement is a matter of indifference. They could be read in reverse order without hurt to either the historical sense or the moral apperception. For there is truth in the philosopher's remark that Seneca is "like a dancer who finishes always where he begins."[2] "You are thinking perhaps," writes Seneca at the beginning of his twenty-third letter to the patient Lucilius, "that my letter will be about last winter, and its gentle treatment of me, or complain at the miserable spring we are having, how unseasonable, how cold, and other trifling follies of men with nothing to write about. No, my Lucilius. That which I write shall be of service to you and to me, and exhort you to goodness." And the exhortation duly follows at great length.

The result is very wearisome. Even Lucilius pathetically wrote once to his mentor "praying him for more books and a little less good advice." The Letters harp on themes eternally recurrent, upon the preparation for and the folly of the fear of death, on time's value, on old age, themes significant of the writer's own age and the times wherein he lived. Now a letter is devoted to some special point in philosophic doctrine. Stoic, Platonic, Peripatetic, all is grist to Seneca's mill. Rarely he makes incursions into the realm of meta-

[1] Seneca, Epist. 88.
[2] Malebranche, ap. Martha, Les Moralistes, p. 121.

physics, but submits that such need apology. "How can the Platonic ideas make me a better man, you ask? Because Plato teaches me that nothing which excites and inflames the passions really *is*." Once he slips half unconsciously into a discussion concerning olive trees and their transplanting. It is too rare a bypath to the main hard-beaten track of his preaching of virtue. For logicians and their paradoxes he had the liveliest impatience and contempt. "I have no time for such trifling," he writes. And indeed the examples quoted of the popular philosophy of Quibbles go far to justify his scorn. "Is justice animal or vegetable or mineral?" Epicureanism had not unnaturally a strong hold upon Roman society when its only rivals were such futilities on the one hand, and the self-contained, self-satisfied Stoicism on the other.

Thus Seneca ploughs, reploughs, and ploughs again his narrow furrow on the arid sands of thought. "The wise man's one and only duty is to be pedagogue of the human race." There was a bold Chian sceptic who denied that moral philosophy was any part of philosophy at all! Seneca panted with indignation at the heretical ignorance. If the philosopher used not his entire teaching to lead the young into the paths of virtue, the residue was waste, the life but one of sand and thorns. This was the philosopher's quest, the crown of his life and of his every endeavour.[1]

Devoted to such literary and philosophic pursuits, the last days of Seneca's life passed by quietly, busily, and, it seems, contentedly. The moral pedagogue in his study remained untroubled by a thought of men's indifference to his preaching, of the common need for some stronger sanction for morality than any which he was offering in such abundance, and with such reiterated emphasis. The old statesman in his retirement never expresses a regret for past activity, a lament for lack of employment.

> "O yes.
> To moon about religion, to inhume
> Your ripened age in solitary walks,
> For self-discussion; to debate in letters
> Vext points with earnest friends; past other men
> To cherish natural instincts, yet to fear them
> And less than any use them; oh, no doubt,
> In a corner sit and mope, and be consoled

[1] See note at end.

With thinking one is clever, while the room
Rings through with animation and the dance . . .
. . . When night succeeds,
Evading, yet a little seeking, what
You would and would not, turn your doubtful eyes
On moon and stars to help morality."

Surely Seneca had earned his rest and was contented with it! What if his "under-sheriffry had done more good than all his high speculations"? Now in his old age he might be allowed that "notable contempt and scorn towards civil business" which "the cardinals of Rome, the theologues and friars and schoolmen" expressed with lesser grace. His health was never good, and he rejoices that "he felt not time's injury in his mind as he endured it in his body. His mind was strong and glad to have so small a dealing with the body."[1] He lived simply, on plain fare and country apples, refusing wine and every luxury, drinking the running water only. His food was too difficult for poisoning, and this led to the silly tale of an attempt baffled by its meagre simplicity. How could the philosopher, leading such a life, engaged in such honourable and quiet pursuits, given up to his favourite studies and vaunting their supreme usefulness in the life of man, concerning whom Rome scarcely knew whether he were in her midst or in the country, the former tutor of the Prince from early youth to manhood, his adviser and maintainer, despite the mere stereotyped admiration which he professed for Cato, how could such an one be entangled in the ill-conceived conspiracy against his pupil's and his Emperor's life? Surely it seemed incredible.

And other considerations intervened to hinder the moralist. There was once at Court (he himself narrates the anecdote) an old man who, being asked how he had won that rarest of Court prizes, length of years, replied that it had been by receiving injuries and being grateful for them.[2] Seneca had received at Nero's hands wealth, prosperity and power. Should he sacrifice length of years by receiving benefits and being ungrateful for them. His own interminable Treatise on Benefits might then appear the bitterest of self-condemnatory satires ever penned. "Ingratitude's most inexcusable shape is forgetfulness of benefits received." "Nothing may excuse ingratitude, neither ill-health, nor poverty, nor self-praise. Its punishment is an uneasy conscience and all

[1] Epist. 26. [2] De Ira ii. 33.

men's just reproach." "Yet surely, it is argued, some gifts are no benefits, gifts forced upon a man without the liberty of refusal. Could Seneca refuse Nero's gifts?" The defence breaks down. Seneca had accepted his riches without unwillingness, and regarded them as benefits. Nero may not have been the "worthy giver" whose portrait is presented in the treatise. But repayment by assassination, could this come within the circling horizon of the recipient's duty? "Circumstances alter cases. I will keep my promise to go out to dinner if it be merely cold, but not if there be a snowstorm. So in cases I must not repay a kindness." Even though Nero's friendship were changed to enmity, to repay it with the knife, did this fulfil the maxim? "Gifts may be unsuitably made, as books to a ploughman, or a case of wine to a drunkard, and gratitude be lessened." Did Seneca ever feel wealth unsuited to a philosopher? "Though injury counterbalance the benefit, yet may the benefit not be forgotten." How had Nero done injury to Seneca that he should forget the benefit? "Ingratitude changes not the giver. He is not great who gives and loses all return; but he is great who loses all return and notwithstanding gives." What of the man who receives all and gives death in return? This is not found presented formally as a subsidiary question for discussion in all the tangled wilderness of the seven books. Was it too obvious even for Seneca's consideration?[1]

To exchange ease for peril, and peace for conspiracy, study for intrigue, a calm old age and quiet death for ambitious decrepitude, and a lively chance of perishing with violence, and to add black ingratitude withal—this was truly not a programme which was likely to attract the philosopher and statesman.

And yet against all the strong arguments from probability certain facts must be briefly set. The very first mention of Piso's conspiracy is in connection with Seneca's name. A certain Romanus denounced him to Nero in A.D. 62 as an "ally of Piso." Seneca retorted *by the same charge* and crushed the informer. "This," according to the Roman historian, "was the beginning of Piso's alarm and of the great and unlucky conspiracy." Obviously friendship with Piso was suspicious. Then in A.D. 65 Natalis accuses Seneca directly of conspiracy. Tacitus hesitates between two explanations. Either Natalis, had been go-between of Piso and Seneca, or Natalis, knowing that Nero wanted a pretext to

[1] See note at end.

destroy Seneca, invented the charge. Later the historian prefers the second explanation. Yet to do so he has to repeat as his own belief the foolish story that Nero had tried unsuccessfully to poison Seneca, a story he has previously mentioned somewhat contemptuously as a rumour. And his opinion remains but an opinion on the facts which are presented to us. There is no more evidence or probability that Nero hated Seneca in A.D. 65 than there is of such hatred in A.D. 62. Why then should Natalis accuse him? The informer had a most circumstantial story ready. Piso, he said, had sent him to Seneca on one occasion when the latter was ill to ask after him, and to complain that Seneca refused to allow Piso to come to see him. Seneca had replied that frequent meetings between himself and Piso were to the benefit of neither of them, but that his own safety (or health) depended on Piso's preservation. Questioned later as to the meaning of this extraordinary reply Seneca returned a curious answer, which has been usually misunderstood. He admitted Natalis' visit and his own refusal to see Piso, but he accounted for this on the grounds of ill-health and love of quiet. And his apparent evasion of the question as to whether he had made the last mysterious remark really amounted to an indignant denial. It was on the face of it a dangerous remark. If meant, as his apologists urge, simply as an expression of friendship for Piso, why did he not admit it, and plead this harmless interpretation? Either his reply is an evasion, in which case the evasion is by itself highly significant, or it is an indignant denial in form of a question. "Dangerous words like these? Is it likely that I should have uttered them?"

Seneca therefore denies Natalis' report of his reply. Guilty or innocent, he had scarcely any choice. And a cross-examination of his evidence would prove him, if innocent, the victim of most remarkable coincidences. He was accused of intimacy with Piso and denied the charge in A.D. 62. Accused of it again in A.D. 65, he admitted it. In 62 he showed by his retaliation on Romanus that such intimacy was dangerous. In 65, accused of knowing this, he denied it and pleaded ill-health as his sole reason for refusing to see Piso. Accused in 65 of saying that his own safety depended on Piso's preservation, he denied the charge. To have admitted it would have proved his knowledge that Piso was a dangerous friend. Yet this fact, he says, was not the reason for his refusal to see Piso. The

cause of that was simply ill-health. Finally, on the very morning of the conspiracy, Seneca, who had been previously in Campania, travelled to a country house within four miles of Rome. The defence must maintain the journey on this day of all days to have been a pure coincidence and a most unlucky coincidence. Just as in his refusal to see Piso his ill-health unluckily coincided with the fact that he knew and had known for three years that Piso's friendship was dangerous. And why did Piso send to complain of Seneca's refusal if they had not previously been friends together? Circumstantial evidence again is curiously hostile to Seneca. And there was undoubtedly a persistent rumour in Rome that the military clique intended to set Seneca in Nero's place, not Piso. Subrius Flavus, ran the rumour, had determined to kill Piso as soon as Nero was dead. "The soldiers were not going to replace a harpist by a vocalist. That would not heal the disgrace." The tale may have been an invention to meet the undoubted difficulty that such a man as Seneca could hardly have wished to substitute a Piso for a Nero. Yet it squares curiously with Piso's anxiety to see Seneca, and Natalis' account of his answer, which Seneca apparently denies.

There remains the charge of ingratitude, and Seneca's own treatise. Yet the veriest child to-day might argue that the good of the state cancelled all private obligations, that for a client to murder his patron, if his patron be a tyrant, becomes a praiseworthy deed. All that is needed is to label the victim aright, and of certain labels there is always a plentiful stock. It is true that there remains a slightly sour taste in the goblet of admiration. "Et tu Brute" casts a little shadow in the sunlight of the deed. Yet at times there may seem no help for it, and the favourite must strike the blow for his country's deliverance. And a passage in this very treatise of Seneca upon Benefits gives us sudden pause. Should favours be returned, this is his problem, to a cruel tyrant such as the famous Phalaris?

> "If the tyrant desires stage-artificers and harlots, and such gifts as may soften his fierceness, I will willingly make offer of them to him. I will give him yachts and other toys for sea-delights to whom I would refuse the gift of armoured cruisers.
>
> But if all hope of his sanity be for ever gone, my kindness which I return to him shall be therewith a kindness to the world. Departure from this life is his

best remedy, and it is best for him to pass away who will never come to himself again."[1]

The characteristic traits of Phalaris are exactly Nero's, his passion for the theatre, his wantonness, his love of voyaging. Written probably at a time when Piso's conspiracy is afoot, the passage justifies the assassination of a tyrant by one who has received benefits at his hands. Is Nero Seneca's Phalaris, or is Seneca again victim of an unfortunate coincidence? The return for favours received is—murder. If Nero, Tigellinus, and Poppaea, had read this passage, what must they have thought of it?

Probable arguments maintain Seneca's innocence. The only facts produced and circumstantial evidence suggest his guilt. The actual verdict of not-proven is permitted us, but on one admission only, that Nero, Poppaea, and Tigellinus, had reason to suspect him, and condemned him to death when the conspiracy had been detected on grounds which, if not conclusive, are at least not unintelligible.[2]

§ 4. The Death of Seneca

Upon the confession of Natalis and his denunciation of Seneca, Nero sent a military tribune, Gavius Silvanus, to ask the philosopher what answer he could make to the charge. Seneca was dining with his wife Pompeia Paulina and two friends, when the tribune arrived. He displayed no fear nor any surprise, and returned the answer the meaning of which has already been discussed. The Emperor, judging the answer defiant and tantamount to a confession of guilt, sent Silvanus back with a mandate of death. One contemporary historian states that the tribune hesitated to obey and consulted Rufus the prefect, who commanded him to execute his commission. This would prove Silvanus one of the yet undetected conspirators. Later he was accused, acquitted, and yet committed suicide. There are not a few dark alleys not yet open to the light in this labyrinth of the plot and its story.

Seneca received the command to die with intrepid cheerfulness. Being forbidden to send for his will, "he left," he said "as his sole bequest to his friends that which alone he could give to them, and yet the fairest gift of all, the example of his life." He sought to check their weeping, now with ex-

[1] Seneca, De Benef. vii. 20.3.4. [2] See note at end.

hortation, now with rebuke. "Were all the precepts of their philosophy to be forgotten, now in the very hour of trial? Was reason, fortified by long years of thought and study, to fail at the final test? Nero's cruelty was known to all. Could it be hoped that the murderer of mother and of brother would spare the instructor of his youth?"

Turning to Paulina, he embraced her tenderly. He besought her not to give way to measureless grief. Let her solace herself in the days to come by the recollection of her husband's noble life. But Paulina declared she would not outlive him, and Seneca, proud of her courage and fearful lest after his own death she should be exposed to insults, yielded to her desire. "I had shown to thee," he cried, "that which might comfort the grief of living, but thou preferrest death's glory. How can I grudge it thee, or to mankind the example that thou givest? Die we with equal courage, but thine be the greater glory in death."

The physician severed the veins of both, but death tarried, and the pain was very great. Fearing to cause Paulina greater suffering at sight of his own anguish, and fearful for his own steadfastness at sight of her dolour, he persuaded her to withdraw into another room. With all his wonted eloquence he dictated his dying words to his servants. Still death lingered and he begged his old friend, the physician Statius Annæus, to give him the hemlock poison which he had before prepared against this hour. Placed finally in a warm bath, he sprinkled the nearest servants with the water. "A libation to Jove the Deliverer," he cried, and at length passed away. His body was burned without pomp as he had enjoined in his will long before his riches and his power had "been surrendered." Paulina did not die. For Nero, apprised of her resolve, sent in haste to forbid it, and her attendants at the soldiers' bidding stopped the flow of blood. She lived a few years longer, the pallor of her countenance always recalling to men's minds her narrow escape from death.

There is much, even in Seneca's death-scene, as in his life and writings, which seems vanity and ostentation. He and other Stoics, notably Thrasea, could not die without theatrical affectation and heroic pose. He had prepared beforehand to play the part of dying Socrates, and played it through to the very end. Rome was waiting eagerly for the story of his passing and for his dying words, and Rome was not disappointed. "His last words were spoken to the public as much as to

his wife and child."[1] His is that "strong tendency to see himself in a heroic light"[2] which would not be frustrated even in death itself. The comment may seem harsh, but it is harsh only to a northern temperament. The Southerner, and Seneca was of Spanish blood, would see but the greater dignity in the parade of fortitude. And none can deny Seneca's courage to the finish.

Indeed the manner of his dying is characteristic of the entire man. His very moral enthusiasm seems to the calmer Teuton stock assumed because too loud and too effusive, cold because redundant, hollow because wearisome and verbose. He is the preacher who delights in the very sound of his eloquent periods, and is regardless therefore of the contemptuous slumber of his congregation. He protests over much, and by magniloquent insistence on the obvious affords the vision as of some far-stretching shallow mere with muddy banks, not the cold clear depths of the silent river. His power of self-restraint in rhetoric was small. His foes to mock the eloquence of his precepts could point the finger of scorn at his daily life. Preaching self-renunciation, he indulged himself in the possession of riches and usury's employment to increase them. Publishing moral maxims with iteration and reiteration, by his teaching he gave to the world a pupil, Nero. Open to men's fiercest of invectives and of scorn as the hypocrite self-deluded by his own fatal gift of eloquence, he wins even from his admirers a cool evaluation of esteem rather than admiring devotion. "He possessed an agreeable talent," says the Roman historian dispassionately, "and was popular in his own day." Men removed by one single generation from the fascination, the irresistible fascination, of eloquence, be it of the spoken or the written word, marvel that the orator should have wielded such a power over the men of his own day. Honesty and moral earnestness, even when encumbered by verbosity, may exercise a lasting though diminished influence. But is the warrant for the preacher's honesty anything but his life? There is little but his own self-praise to claim for Seneca the title of exemplar in the difficulties of life. His exhortations are presented in that sonorous and magnificent Latinity which is an ethical and religious vehicle far surpassing that of any other language ancient or modern, save it be Elizabethan English. But they lack sympathy; they are devoid of admiration. There is

[1] Boissier, Relig. Rom. ii. p. 28. [2] R. L. Stevenson on Knox.

thought therein, but who could fail to think it? Analysis, but of the obvious. "So long as thou doest well unto thyself, men will speak good of thee."

It is urged that we do wrong to Seneca to judge him by the claim of time and of eternity, that claim which philosophy to justify its own existence must be prepared to meet. At a time when death knocked ever importunately at men's doors, when no man could expect escape from the visitant of dread, when the terror overshadowed all the earth, then Seneca boldly raised the standard of a serene and an untroubled scorn alike of fortune's power and of cruelty's malignity. In truth that standard was always borne by Seneca, but waves the soldier's banner more fitly amid the dust of warfare and of carnage, or over smiling fields of happy peace? The picture of the Emperor is not justly overdrawn and over-coloured to justify Seneca's claim to fame. Rome and the Roman Empire were not cowering beneath an accurst tyrant's frown, and Seneca did not preach from the dungeon to the immediate victims of sword, arena, stake. The life of Rome, the life of Seneca himself, the sober verdict of history, these deny the exaggeration and condemn the portraiture. Seneca preached to a small clique of Roman Society, which genially applauded the eloquence of the preaching, as the preacher himself admired it, and lived comfortably and at ease. To renounce wealth if necessary, meantime to amass it by recognised ways; to anticipate adversity without alarm, meantime to use prosperity sedately; this is good teaching and justly popular. If it is not heroic, heroic teaching can only be begotten of heroic times. And heroism in the Rome of Nero's day did not reside in that select circle which owned Seneca as spiritual director for twenty years of his activity. The sudden storm discovers it here and elsewhere. But life had long been sunny for confessor and for penitent, before the storm broke upon them.

There is much in Seneca's writings which recalls the precepts, sometimes the very words of Christian doctrine. Therefore the unthinking Church of a much later time must needs accept as genuine those most transparent of all forgeries, the letters which passed between St Paul and Seneca, wherein we know not whether the greater admiration should be reserved to the forger's knowledge of his audience' credulity, or to his ignorance alike of the Christian, of the Roman, and of history. Seneca has

written upon God and upon Man's duty to his God in words scarce distinguishable from Christian scripture, if we disengage and isolate his statements from his Stoic formalism, and from the Stoic interpretation and connotation of the terms employed. Yet an entire treatise must leave that reader unmoved who is dominated by a few words of Christ. Grant that this test proposed be by no means a fair one, whether for our associations' or imagination's sake or for some other reason. Return to the tests imposed by the appreciation of his own day and folk. In his own generation regarded by many as a hypocrite, in that which followed viewed as an influence passed and dead, regarded with a quiet wonder and with some contempt, neglected by the later teachers of his creed, whether slave or Emperor, Seneca the moralist and philosopher earns scanty guerdon of recognition for long life and longer writings. But how shall we claim a greater as his due?

Seneca as mere man deserves not so ready a depreciation. He served his country and his Emperor for long years wisely and well. He lived simply, honourably, purely, in friendship with many men, in unfailing affection for his wife. These are great merits in Nero's Court, and have hardly ceased to be merits yet. If he amassed wealth by usury, he relinquished it without reluctance. He crowned a long life with a courageous death. By his end he proved his long teaching on death's pettiness genuine in his own person. It is his misfortune that we are bound to welcome the unassailable proof. Three years before he died he wrote in glowing admiration upon the death of Socrates, who drank "the potion of Immortality and discoursed on death till death itself." "How much more," he wrote, "ought we to envy his felicity than theirs who are served in precious stone-encrusted goblets." And in the year before he died himself he set before himself a test in a rare moment of happy insight, this very test of death. "For that last hour," so runs his letter, "I wait without dread, wherein all disguises and all dyes shall be rapt away, and I shall judge myself, whether I speak brave words or feel them; whether this defiance of words which I have hurled against fortune hath been mere pretence and shallow mime or no. Death shall pronounce the sentence. I accept the condition. I do not fear the judgment."[1] This, says Montaigne, is

[1] Epist. 26.

Philosophy's task, to teach men how to die. Death was Seneca's touchstone, and he then rang true.

> "His overthrow heap'd happiness upon him;
> For then, and not till then, he felt himself,
> And found the blessedness of being little:
> And, to add greater honours to his age
> Than man could give him, he died fearing God."[1]

§ 5. The Terror

Few monarchs can bravely dismiss an attempted assassination from their thoughts as a mere "perquisite of the profession." And when the plot has been maturing for three years, when the infection has spread through many classes, there is still more excuse for the panic which finds its satisfaction in persecution than when the attempt is but the criminal deed of an insane or blood-thirsty fanatic. Violence reaps its own reward. Nero never recovered the balance of his temperament. There ensued, some few months after the detection of the conspiracy, an outbreak of Imperial wrath and suspicion directed against all sorts and conditions of men, and resulting in a series of executions and of suicides, which indeed make but a dull monotony of horror of the record, as its writer sadly anticipates. The disaster of defeat, the capture of the city (it is Tacitus himself who suggests the comparison), these too embrace a multitude of deaths. Yet these are obscured or easily forgotten in the triumph or the misery of the issue. But as Senator helplessly follows Senator along the path to death, crowding into Pluto's halls as placid sheep into the slaughter-house, the reverence which the historian demands for aristocratic blood can save the reader from disgust as little as it preserved the victims from their doom. Though an obituary column should scorn, with Tacitean scorn, to exhibit any single name of the commoner folk, though it parade the long list of a tyrant's high-born victims, yet it is but a weary pleasure to recount their sufferings one by one, neither does it promote that reverence for birth divorced from valour which is pleaded as its sole justification. Posterity looks eagerly at a Robespierre or St Just, the murderers, and lets the heavily laden carts bearing their victims to death roll by well-nigh unheeded. The English writer labours to explain

[1] See note at end.

"the patience of the subjects under the barbarity of the despot," discovering in this patience at first sight one "of the most inscrutable problems of history." Surely the half-dozen causes carefully alleged add little to the completeness of the story. Mankind may canonise the virtues of the great rather than execrate their vices; the Roman may have been scornful of the readiness with which the irresolute martyrs slew themselves, relieving Nero from a portion of the odium due to him; the citizen, claiming tyranny as his own birthright, might fairly ask how he could resent its exercise in another; the corrupt morality of the age may be the patent key to unlock the door of every problem of the time. Such notable reflections merit the gravest consideration in their places. Here, on the discovery and ruinous failure of a great conspiracy, whereof Treason has been pregnant these three years and is delivered of it still-born amid great anguish, what could men do but sit stunned and wait alike the coming and the passing of the day of vengeance? Treason conceives not her second and more fortunate offspring in such rapid sequence that we must compass sea and land in our bewilderment to explain the tarrying of its birth for three more years.[1]

Nero's wrath fell most heavily upon the Senate and its members. "I hate you, Nero, because you are a Senator" became now the choicest flower of flattery. True, as Seneca once had said to him, he could not for all his slaying slay his successor. But he might hinder his successor from slaying him. Young Lucius Silanus, last of the unhappy family, of whom Piso had been suspicious, died fighting valiantly with the soldiers sent to kill him in the little Apulian fishing town of Bari, the fourth Silanus who perished for Nero's security. C. Cassius Longinus the jurist preserved among the ancestral images a statue of lean and hungry Cassius the tyrannicide, inscribed "The Leader of the Cause." An old man and blind, he was banished to Sardinia, whence later under Vespasian he returned to a peaceful death in Rome. Rubellius Plautus had already been slain,[2] but there still lived his kinsfolk—Antistia Pollitta, his much-loved wife, who cherished his blood-stained garments in undying remembrance; her father L. Antistius Vetus, who vainly had counselled his son-in-law to resist the Emperor's cruelty; and Sextia her grandmother. In vain Pollitta forced herself in upon the Emperor to implore him

[1] See note at end. [2] *Cf.* above, page 143.

to spare her father's life. The three died courageously together. Happier was her father's friend Gallus, who escaped with sentence of exile. The whole year A.D. 65 was gloomy and disastrous. An autumn pestilence ravaged Rome, claiming, it is said, no fewer than thirty thousand lives. "God's vengeance," cried the Christians, "for the persecution of the Church." A wild storm swept Campania and Southern Latium, destroying in its course crops, orchards, and houses alike. Lugdunum, richest and most prosperous city of the whole of Gaul, the second capital of the Empire, was utterly destroyed by fire. "In the evening stood a mighty city: in the morning it was gone." Nero sent back to the citizens the generous gift of four million sesterces which they had contributed when Rome was burned, and the city rose again from the ground with new hatred to Vienna, its more fortunate rival.[1]

The Imperial generosity is but a brief interlude in the unvarying record of death at Rome which begins again with the beginning of the following year, A.D. 66.

The very troublesome Antistius Sosianus, who had been banished in A.D. 62,[2] discovering that a fellow exile of his, one Pammenes a "magician," was in correspondence with a Roman noble named P. Anteius, managed to purloin the seer's papers, and discovered in them Anteius' horoscope and that of Ostorius Scapula as well. He at once sent and denounced them to Nero, securing thereby their deaths and his own return from exile. It is satisfactory to hear that the Flavians in A.D. 70 despatched him into exile once again. Rufrius Crispinus in his Sardinian home of exile received command to die, and slew himself.[3] Both Seneca's brothers perished, Gallio by suicide, Mela by fault of his own greed, for which he had eccentrically declined the honours of a public career. Now it proved no less his ruin. On his son Lucan's death he had claimed his large property with an avidity which roused up Fabius Romanus, one of the dead poet's friends, against him. Forged letters and his riches were enough to prove his guilt of sharing in the conspiracy apart from his liaison with Epicharis, and he committed suicide. It is stated that Mela added a codicil to his will bitterly contrasting his own innocence with the guilt of Rufrius Crispinus and Anicius Cerialis. The former was already dead. But the latter, despite his recent flattery of

[1] See note at end. [2] See above, page 135. [3] *Cf.* above, page 272.

Nero,[1] was thereby compelled to slay himself. If this tale be true, Mela vanishes from the scene, not only a more than wontedly unsympathetic and disagreeable character, but also convicted out of his own mouth of at least some knowledge of the plot. That Nero went to the trouble of forging the codicil seems an unlikely tale enough. Thus one by one all the Seneca family passed away. The philosopher's son Marcus must have already died, as he is never mentioned in the tale of his father's death. Unless Gallio's daughter Novatilla still survived (and nothing is heard of her) Paulina's death a few years later was the close of the family history for good and all.[2]

Tigellinus' personal spite now claimed two victims. The first, Minucius Thermus, was a mere ex-praetor. But the other was a man who in his life and death stands out in such startling contrast to those who died with noble maxims on their lips, the models of a persecuted fortitude, that by very virtue of his careless humour he wins from men an interest, even an admiration, which fervid orations of interminable enthusiasm never earn, nor even Stoic rivals, albeit more deserving, so easily secure. Novelist and wit, the keen observer of men's follies and gifted with a sense of humour well-nigh unique in Rome, C. Petronius Arbiter has left behind him the fragments of a romance which may concern us later, and the record of a death which may extort unwilling admiration from the most serious of mankind.

§ 6. Petronius

Petronius when in Rome devoted his nights to amusement or business, his days to sleep. He was no common spendthrift or profligate, but had studied carefully, and was master of, the very Art of Luxury. His conversation and his acts revealed an *insouciance* alike light-hearted and engaging. Yet as proconsul in Bithynia, and again as consul, he displayed a vigorous capacity for affairs. But, his public duties ended, he returned to his indolent pursuit of vice, and was taken as one of Nero's most intimate friends. He became the Arbiter, the Canon, of Court taste. The Emperor weary with surfeit of enjoyment, thought nothing graceful nothing refined, unless he could gain Petronius' approval

[1] *Cf.* above, page 273. [2] See note at end.

In the science of Pleasure Petronius outvied Tigellinus, in influence with Nero he rivalled him.

The character of Petronius is indeed one of the most curious products of the age of Nero, when the Empire seemed already old and there was neither freshness of life nor enthusiasm of belief. His was not the insatiate curiosity, the child-like enjoyment, the delight in novelty, of a Pepys. He sipped the cup of pleasure with the lazy appreciation of a connoisseur to whom no flavour can be new or worth a sigh either of desire or delight. His was that perfect devotion to taste in life and language and art which in all its subdued artificiality may yet appear the only perfect sanity in life's mad tumult, the quiet grey amid the crude jarring of discordant colours. In place of the fierce questionings of an eager grasping at realities, the languid contentment with externalities gave him placid satisfaction. Problems of life and death, of righteousness and sin, of growth and of decay, are but as troublous ghosts haunting the couch of an uneasy sleeper. Let him sleep the deep untroubled sleep of carelessness, knowing neither whether he shall ever awake, nor what might greet his waking sight. Why should man vex himself with riddles which he cannot solve, or touch the burden of a neighbour? Life is his own, refinement, enjoyment, the quality of the apprehension of sensations. Such satisfaction once attained fades away only with life itself. The arbiter of taste can never fail himself. From a necessary call to work he will not flinch, nor will he make parade of the fulfilment. His leisure and his wealth are but the seasoning of his comfort, nor can the demand that he relinquish them mar his serenity or, if it so chance, his humour at the piquancy of fortune's mandates. Such men make their graceful exit from the stage of life leaving their companion players neither the better nor perhaps greatly the worse for their living (these cannot act the others' parts), save for the fascination of their personality. For this may prove a veritable Lethe stream for emulation and all formative desire. They live in the enchanter's garden of flowers, in the garden of their self-enchantment, an enchantment of clear vision, not of delusion. Happy perhaps the Parsifal, heedlessly breaking in upon its peace in eager fervour, with hope to rouse the dreamers, who escapes with courage still high from the beguilement. Cursed or mourned by the strenuous who break the meshes of their spell; admired by the mediocre;

fruitlessly envied, now by the idler, now by the way-worn and travel-stained pilgrim on the dusty high-road ; anathema to the Puritan; idol of the commonplace; envy of the discontented ; disquiet and bewilderment of the idealist ;—they drift undisturbed down their gliding stream of life. Others may be storm-tossed upon the ocean of endeavour and battle, seek triumph by endurance or joy by striving. They abide careless alike of the victor fleet which sails proudly to the homeland, and of the wreckage of the vanquished heaped high upon the enemy's shores.

> "Therefore I communed with a saintly man,
> Who made me sure the Quest was not for me;
> For I was much awearied of the Quest :
> But found a silk pavilion in a field,
> And merry maidens in it ; and then this gale
> Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,
> And blew my merry maidens all about
> With all discomfort."

But though the gale should hurl Sir Gawain quick down to death, he met it with the smiling face of scorn and of indifference.

Such a man was Petronius at Nero's Court, and Tigellinus hated him, his own cruelty and vulgarity being illumined against the background of his rival's elegance. Whether at last the Emperor wearied of Petronius' careless sarcasm, or was envious of his humour and *abandon*, or his suspicious cruelty was excited by lying information, is not certainly known. All tales are told. When Tigellinus accused Petronius in his absence of friendship with the traitor Scaevinus, and the accused was given no opportunity of defence, he knew his fate. He had reached Cumae on his journey of appeal to Nero in Campania when the order came that he might go no further. He understood its hidden meaning and arranged his end with calm indifference. He would not hasten precipitately to die, leaving behind him in his friends' sorrowful memories some precious fragments of a discourse on immortality. Now he opened his veins, now stayed the flow of blood, now let it run again, playing genially with Death as the whim seized him. And Death waited on his pleasure as some patient angler humouring the fancies of his destined prize. From the dying man and his attendant company of friends Rome might expect the customary "bon voyage" of the nobility making its painful

exit from this life, that eloquent debate of philosophy and the soul's existence which the Stoic sufferer never failed to furnish. But Petronius would not have it so. He played with the waiting company in easy interchange of ballad and light roundel. The slaves must needs be summoned, but some should have a flogging for their sole largesse. Instead of "bequeathing to his friends the example of a noble life," he was only careful to break his signet-ring, lest when he was gone it should be used in forgeries against their lives. He dined richly as he was wont. Then, breaking a costly myrrhine bowl which Nero coveted, he went to sleep and passed away quietly, as though there came to him of chance that death whose summoning he had of compulsion invoked.

Thus died Petronius, without ostentation or parade, yet none the less a Roman than the Stoic who, displaying an equal fearlessness of death, honoured in his last hours precepts which he had vigorously preached throughout his life to all. To the Epicurean life was a pleasant game of chance, and, if the dice had fallen awry, he would never spoil it by dying the protesting victim of compulsion and a tyrant's cruelty. Yet "the death of Petronius was not less effectual than that of Seneca to humble a tyrant by the discovery of his impotence."[1] One revenge indeed he claimed to take upon the Emperor, and that was, like the man, unique. Many of Nero's victims filled their dying testaments with fulsome praises of the Emperor and of Tigellinus, if they might save their kinsfolk or a portion of their property by this means. Petronius wrote carefully the story of the abominations of the Prince and of his favourites, and sent it under seal to Nero. Tigellinus, master of the revels, might well be puzzled by the artistic vengeance. But a Petronius' fancy might paint with pleasure the picture to the imagination of Nero's eager breaking of the seals and humiliated disappointment.[2]

§ 7. The Government and the Philosophers

"Please your Majesty, that learned men in all ages have had their judgments free, and most commonly disagreeing from the common judgment of the world; such also have they published by pen and tongue; and yet notwithstanding they themselves have lived in the common society with

[1] Gibbon, iv. c. 40. [2] See note at end.

others, and have borne patiently with the errors and imperfections which they could not amend."

The plea of John Knox to Mary Stuart may be admitted to explain the unpopularity of the philosophers with the people in Rome, as with most people in every age and country. Of this general unpopularity there is no doubt. The strongest of the philosophic sects, the Stoics, never won, by their insistent preaching on virtue and morality, any large audience. The chief Stoics with their disciples and pupils formed a small côterie, "an exclusive and fanatical salon,"[1] as they are unkindly nicknamed. Within it doubtless enthusiasm and fervour ran high. But outside was a whole ocean of cold disdain or contemptuous indifference. Even a Tacitus with all his admiration for certain Stoic leaders has branded once and for all time the "intempestiva sapientia" of the sect.

But the causes of the Government's dislike and suspicion of, and of its cruelty in A.D. 66 towards, the Stoic chiefs seem harder to discover. Mere dislike of arrogated superiority of morals is not a quite adequate explanation of a rigorous treatment. Hence one historian has urged that the Government had no dislike of philosophy as such, and never persecuted a philosopher unless he played a conspicuous part in politics.[2] Another invents a new conspiracy in the year A.D. 66 to explain the punishments inflicted.[3] Another thinks that the chief cause of the Emperor's dislike of the Stoic leader was his despair of ever gaining his affection.[4] We do not agree with these suggestions.

It was, we believe, a combination of three causes which induced Nero to declare war upon the philosophers Thrasea Paetus, Helvidius Priscus, Demetrius, Paconius Agrippinus, in A.D. 66. The first was their Cosmopolitanism, the second their very "Quietism," the third their Republican sympathy. Combined with their pride and self-satisfaction, these produced dislike, dislike suspicion, and suspicion persecution.

Cosmopolitanism struck at the root of that Imperial sentiment which it was always the object of the early Empire to encourage by all means possible. Many very noble sentiments could be born of the anti-patriotic bias, but in the rough and tumble of the world it is not a creed which works, and it is deservedly ineffective and unpopular. "Our country is the World, that so we have an ampler scope for

[1] Schiller, p. 679. [2] Merivale, vi. 246-247. [3] Schiller, pp. 669 *sq.*
[4] Renan, L'Antichr, p. 132.

virtue." "Two States do we comprehend in our conception, the one great and in verity a State, comprising Gods and men, wherein we look not to this corner or to that, but we measure our State's boundaries with the sun: the other that wherein the chance of birth has enlisted us. To this greater State we can do service even in retirement." [1]

Such tenets did more than justify, they seemed almost to require as the greater good, that withdrawal of the wisdom of the State from the service of the State which the historian so bitterly censures and the ruler justly condemns. "The chance of birth!" This is no base upon which to rear even a humble dwelling of loyalty, affection, and true service.

The plea of Quietism and of gratitude for its possibility is no more attractive. For its very motive was to serve "the larger State," not through some service to the "inferior," but at its expense. "They greatly err," complains the Stoic Seneca, "who think that philosophers must be contumacious and refractory, must scorn all magistrates and Kings and governors. None are so grateful to Kings and governors as is the philosopher. For they secure to him peace and tranquillity in undisturbed retirement. That simple and sincere man who hath abandoned Senate House and market place and all the administration of the State that he may retire to an ampler sphere, he loveth those through whom he may do this in safety." "Imperturbata publicis occupationibus quies." And what of the State thus deprived of its simple and sincere investigators of truth? Can this love of theirs justly be reciprocal? The philosopher may be a Senator and a man of note. By refusing service he tacitly condemns. By boasting his citizenship in the ampler heaven he renounces, it might seem, with scorn his citizenship on earth, and with it his allegiance and fidelity. His uselessness is vaunted as the higher life, his superiority is paraded before the dazzled eyes of those who have not yet renounced the claims of their own State upon their activity. He who treats the Government as a thing of naught condemns it. And finally, contemptuous of the affairs of the present life, if he remembers by rare chance his Roman blood, he too sings the praises of the hard Republican patriots of the generation which withstood the founder of the Empire. Their Stoic defiance of power and of fate strikes an answering chord in the breast of the Quietist and Cosmopolitan of the next century.

[1] Seneca.

And thus Stoicism became an "opposition," even perhaps in despite of itself, and an opposition which never by any chance seemed to approve of the government. The very presence of these lofty high-souled teachers in Rome became an annoyance, endured for many years, despite their uselessness and the actual danger resulting to the Emperor from their practices and precepts. But after the great conspiracy the temper failed any longer to endure the strain. An avowedly unpatriotic opposition justifying its lack of what the government deems patriotism's very essence, and besides arrogating to itself the exclusive possession of the superior virtues with the most exasperating self-complacency, such cannot expect that tolerance will last for ever. And if a great crisis destroys that tolerance, we may, if we so choose, lament the fate of the opposition leaders and yet not count it altogether undeserved.

P. Clodius Thrasea Paetus of Padua had long before A.D. 66 been a prominent figure at Rome. He had on more than one occasion offended the Emperor, and their supposed reconciliation had been a hollow one.[1] He had walked out of the Senate House in the debate after Agrippina's death; he had not been admitted with the rest of the Senate to Nero's presence upon the birth of Poppaea's daughter; he had refused to be present in the Senate when divine honours were decreed to the Empress, or at her funeral, or at the annual taking of the vows of allegiance to the Prince. He never sacrificed for Nero's safety or for his "celestial voice." For the last three years, in fact, he had never been seen in the Senate House at all. "Virtue itself," as his injudicious admirers called him, must be held to condemn all the proceedings of Senate and of Emperor by this studied indifference and unbroken absence. In so noted and so venerable a figure this behaviour was more than mere reluctance or weariness. It was "desertion," almost "faction." Accusers were not wanting when so clear an opportunity for attack was offered. Cossutianus Capito had a personal grudge against Thrasea, since the philosopher in earlier days had helped some Cilician plaintiffs to obtain redress from him for misgovernment. Eprius Marcellus was a veritable bull-dog of hostility to such a character. "The Roman journals," these men declared, "are

[1] *Cf.* above, pages 124, 275.

eagerly read by provinces and armies to see what Thrasea has *not* done. Men speak, as it were, of two parties in the state—a Nero-party and a Thrasea-party, just as in old days of a Caesar and a Cato faction. His Stoic sect vaunted the Republican watchword of 'Liberty.' Sullen discontent with the existing régime was always their trait. Republican observances were added. He and Helvidius Priscus, his son-in-law, wore garlands to celebrate every birthday of the tyrannicides Brutus and Cassius, and drank solemn toasts to their memory. It was little use to banish a Cassius and leave Brutus' devoted disciple, the leader of Revolutionary malcontents, untouched." "Better an open traitor," declared Marcellus, "than this never-ceasing tacit blame; better avowed censure than the silence which condemns everything. All public life and all public business, Rome, the city, and the magistrates, were despised and scorned by this pedagogue of melancholy face. What did he care for the peace of the Empire, the prosperity of the citizens? For Nero's safety he had never a thought, for his genius no recognition. Long since he had lost all affection for the state. Now he banned it from his presence. Let him then relieve it of his life."

Thrasea, as has been said, was no popular hero. The very cult of his wisdom and his virtue is probably a later literary growth of the Flavian period. His trial for treason coincided with Tiridates' entrance into Rome, and the pageantry could easily divert popular attention. Neither would those who had never raised a finger in defence of the popular darling Octavia look on at Thrasea's death with anything but unperturbed indifference. It was an easy matter to deal with the little knot of disaffected idealists which clustered round the central figure of the sage. One brave young impetuous tribune of the people, Rusticus Arulenus, who later wrote his Master's life and suffered death at Domitian's hands for it, now was eager to place his veto upon the whole proceedings in the Senate, interposing thereby a time-worn lichen-crusted fence of hollow wood between the avalanche and its victim. Thrasea forbade him thus to throw away the promise of a young life in the vain effort to save an old man. After long thought he himself refused to appear in the Senate or to make any defence. The Senators were escorted to their deliberations by troops. Soldiers garrisoned the forum and Venus' temple hard by. A speech from Nero, recited by the

quaestor, did not indeed mention Thrasea by name, but made bitter complaint against those "who deserted their public duties," and their "evil example of indolence." Thrasea was condemned to death, Priscus to exile, and with him Paconius Agrippinus the Stoic. Capito and Marcellus received large sums of money as reward.

"For God is my help, and there is none other beside Him." Could philosophy comfort as Religion?

Thrasea's death befell at evening. He was in his gardens with a company of noble-born men and women. With him was Demetrius, the Cynic philosopher, who had declared a life of ease without affliction to be but as a "dead sea," who himself scorned the threat of death, and flung the taunt back later in Nero's very face. As Thrasea discussed earnestly with his friend the Cynic the eternal problem of mankind, the nature of the soul and its separation from the body, one Domitius Caecilianus brought him sadly the news of the Senate's sentence. He listened quietly, and bade his guests depart at once, lest they should share his doom. His wife Arria craved permission to die with him. Her mother, Arria of immortal fame, had perished with her husband Paetus, snatching the dagger from his reluctant hand, and crying as she drove it home, "It does not hurt, my Paetus." The daughter in like manner would die beside Thrasea, but he forbade her. There was one daughter, sole child of their love, and she needed still a mother's care. Then he went out to greet the young quaestor who bore to him the command to die, and welcomed with joy his news that his son-in-law Priscus had escaped from a like doom. With Priscus and Demetrius he entered an inner chamber, and opened the arteries of the arm, calling the hesitating quaestor to approach. "Behold, young sir," he cried, "we pour this libation to Jove the Deliverer. The Gods indeed avert the omen! But thou art born into those times wherein 'tis well to make strong the heart by examples of endurance." The pain was terrible by reason of the slowness of his death, and he turned him to Demetrius. . . .

Here Tacitus' record abruptly ceases. The greatest Stoic of Nero's Principate is dead.

Others displayed like fearlessness. Paconius is celebrated as is Thrasea by the greater Epictetus. "Once Florus asked him if he should go to Nero's performances. 'Why certainly,' said he. 'But why not go yourself then?' 'Surely I should

go had I ever thought it could be subject of debate within myself.' He would not be the common thread in the garment. He was the purple border which lent lustre to the whole." When fate came upon him it found him cheerfully indifferent. "They brought Paconius news. 'Thou art being this moment tried before the Senate.' 'The case goes well, I trust,' replied he. 'But see, it is eleven, our time for exercise.' As he took exercise, in came another messenger. 'Condemned,' he cried. 'To exile?' asked Paconius, coolly. 'Or is it death?' 'Exile.' 'And my goods, are they confiscate?' 'No.' 'Good! Come, let us go to Aricia to breakfast.'" Apollonius of Tyana, the miracle-monger, enjoyed an interview with Tigellinus, when on his journeyings he came to Rome. There he was denounced, but the roll of accusation, ran the legend, when opened contained no word of writing, to the Minister's confusion. "How, Apollonius," asked he, "dost thou confute demons and phantom spirits?" "Even as I do men bloodstained and impious." Tigellinus rallied from the homethrust. "And what thinkest thou of Nero?" "Far more worthily than thou dost. Thou deemst him worthy to sing; I, to be silent." And the philosopher departed with all the honours of war. "Etiam sapientibus cupido gloriae novissima exuitur."

The quaint blend of philosophy and magic in Apollonius suggests the last unhappy victims of the terror, where the two crimes, though here dissociate, brought father and daughter to a common doom. Barea Soranus, five years before a successful governor of Asia, was now charged with treasonable design on Rubellius Plautus' behalf. It was an ancient charge, and more probably his actual Stoic tenets involved him in like ruin with the other philosophers. To it was therefore added the new charge that his daughter Servilia had given money to magicians, certainly with dark designs against the Emperor's life. Servilia was but a child still, in her twentieth year, and in very truth she had sought in her love for her father to learn by magic if Nero would show him mercy. Her husband Pollio was in exile for share in the Pisonian conspiracy. Now her father's life was threatened.

They were brought before the Senate, and Servilia was placed opposite to her father there. She could not bear to look upon him. Had not her thoughtlessness increased his

peril? The accuser demanded of her where were her wedding ornaments, the very trinkets off her neck? Had she not sold them to fee the magicians with the money? She cast herself on the ground before them all in passionate sobbing, unable to say one word for tears. At last she raised her hands to clasp the altar of the Senate House. "They were no unholy Gods whom I implored," she cried, "no magic curses I invoked, nor was my hapless prayer for aught save that thou, Caesar, and ye, my judges, should preserve unhurt my best of fathers. My jewels, my robes, the insignia of my rank I gave as I would have given my life-blood, had the magicians asked it. I neither ever knew their names before, nor the arts which they practise. I named not the Prince, save as some Divinity. My father knew nothing of it. If it be a crime, I, I alone, have sinned."

Soranus broke in upon her plea. "She was guiltless altogether, he pleaded. She had not been with him in Asia. She was too young ever to have known the guilty Plautus. She had no part in the accusations brought against her husband. Her only fault was too great love for him, her father. Let the judges sever her case from his, and there was no doom which he would not joyfully suffer." Father and daughter moved by common impulse hastened with outstretched arms to embrace, but the lictors separated them. The witnesses, unmoved, denounced them harshly. Chief among them was Soranus' own Stoic teacher and false friend, P. Egnatius Celer of Berytus. The treacherous Oriental covered his greed of gain and his deceit under the semblance of a sober and honest philosopher, and delivered his testimony for money secretly received. Thereby the hypocrite philosopher is handed down to us, a name of undying infamy. In vain Cassius Asclepiodotus, a rich citizen of Bithynian Nicaea, sought to save in his hour of peril one whom he had courted in the day of his prosperity and power. Such rare and generous courage was unavailing. The false accusation triumphed and father and daughter were led away to death. The magic rites told heavily against Servilia, who suffered despite her youth, when the matrons Acilia and Paulina were spared.

"Thus gave they proof," writes the scornful historian, "of the Gods' indifference to good and ill alike." Tacitus placed the Stoic creed of the Divine Governance of the world face to

face with life's facts, and condemned its apparent folly. "Cry aloud: for he is a God; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked."

If Tacitus found the Gods a mockery and philosophy but vanity, what of the creeds and hopes of those who lived themselves in Nero's Rome?[1]

[1] See note at end.

CHAPTER IX

Philosophy and Pleasure

§ 1. Scope of the Chapter.
§ 2. Stoicism and its Failure.
§ 3. Persius.
§ 4. Roman Pleasures.
§ 5. The Romance of Petronius.

"Between
The lightning-bursts is seen
Only a driving wreck,
And the pale master on his spar-strewn deck
With anguish'd face and flying hair
Grasping the rudder hard,
Still bent to make some port he knows not where,
Still standing for some false, impossible shore."
(M. Arnold, *A Summer Night.*)

SENECA

FROM A BUST IN THE BERLIN MUSEUM

CHAPTER IX

§ 1. Scope of the Chapter

LONG before the advent of Christianity dissatisfaction at Rome with the formalism of the Roman religion led to attempts in various ways to supplement this if not to supplant it altogether, save in so far as observance of its customary rites, which need not imply any belief in their efficacy, was a necessary part of citizen duties, and in so far expedient and beneficial. Just as had been the case in Athens, so also at Rome, man's intellectual need on the one hand, and his emotional temperament on the other, demanded additional satisfaction, and adopted systems alien from the State religion proper. Theories of God and of Man's highest good or chief aim on the one hand; the recognition of, and atonement for, a sense of sin or personal, as distinct from a common, imperfection on the other; these found expression, the first in various systems of philosophy, the second in new religions borrowed from the East, from Asia Minor, Judaea, and, in particular, from Egypt. In the main such expressions were regarded always rather as supplemental to, or even explanatory of, the State religious observances than as inconsistent with them or hostile to them. Philosophy and Polytheism went hand in hand in this. Neither may we predicate of every Roman citizen, perhaps not even of a considerable portion of their number, this sense of inadequacy in, and consequent dissatisfaction with, the Roman religion.

Yet the growth of Christianity in Rome since its advent to the city in the Principate of Tiberius or Claudius was so rapid as to suggest not only that this dissatisfaction was widespread, but also that previously attempted answers to its demands had failed to allay it in large measure. Thus both on the intellectual and on the emotional side there seems to have been need for the new religion, as a new attempt to meet a long existing demand. But besides this there was

another need for the new religion, that of *creating* a demand for it. The pictures presented to us, and that not by philosophers only, of the life and luxury of Rome in the age of Nero, imply the necessity of creating a dissatisfaction with the principles of life which were generally entertained in that city beyond the extent to which that dissatisfaction already existed. If the previous additions to the Roman religion, both philosophic and religious, had failed to create this dissatisfaction, the need for which we for the moment postulate, this was a second task for Christianity. It is the purpose of the present chapter to attempt to explain and justify the double need of the new religion, and therewith account, partially and humanly speaking only, for its rise and rapid growth in Rome. Our account will of necessity be brief and very incomplete, in view of the great quantity of material which we have to handle. But the historian of the Principate of Nero is compelled to approach the task of appraising the value and the influence of the thought of the age, as expressed first in its creeds and secondly in its practices, however discontented he must remain with his own evaluations.

Two philosophies, as supplemental to and independent of the Roman religion, flourished in the Principate of Nero. The first, Stoicism, found expression in a huge mass of writings by Seneca, in a few poems of Persius, and in the lives of a small and select company of valiant men. It failed altogether to attract the multitude, and either to create or to satisfy that dissatisfaction with the present which was, as will appear, expedient. The causes of that failure must therefore be explained. The second, Epicureanism, found expression rather in the practices of the day than in any formulated creed, and the illustration of its dangerous tendencies both in literature (in the romance of Petronius) and in life, justify the reproaches of its unpopular rival Stoicism. This creed in its practice was popular enough, and from its very popularity we deduce the second need for Christianity.

§ 2. Stoicism and its Failure

We are here concerned only with Stoicism as fashioned and preached in the age of Nero, and therefore by its exponents Seneca and the poet Persius. And the task, though

all the more perplexing because of Seneca's utter and hopeless lack of systematisation and consistency, is yet just in so far illuminative of our main thesis, the inadequacy of the creed for the needs of the day. Seneca's humanity is fatal to his philosophic consistency, and expresses unconsciously his own sense of the incompleteness of his creed. Precept there is in plenty, but the dogma tends to be nebulous. Yet a philosophy in the clouds affords no real sanction of its precepts for life upon earth, however excellent these may be in themselves. There is only one possible basis of precept in the last resort, and that is dogma. And all Seneca's theories of God and God's nature, of Life, Death, and Immortality, of the Universe and Man's Soul, of Man's relations to God and to Man, suffer either from the uncertainty and hesitation of dogma, or from its absence altogether, and a mere reliance upon positive precept, whose sanction is the amount of our belief, not in the writer's earnestness, which is undoubted, but in his authority. And this may very easily be challenged.

Zeno and Chrysippus, whom Seneca recognises as the founders of Stoicism and his masters in philosophy, had declared God to be the first principle or beginning of all things, being *σῶμα τὸ καθαρώτατον*:—"Body—the purest [of all Bodies]." His "forethought" pervaded or was immanent in all things. Everything was absolutely as it was "fated" to be. Man's free will existed just in so far as he might contentedly accept "his fate," as a dog tied to a carriage may run behind it of his own free will. But man could no more alter his "fate" if he objected to it than the dog refuse to be dragged along, if he would not run willingly.

An identification is here suggested of God and Fate, and the omnipresence of God is surely interpreted in terms of Pantheism. The idea of Deity transcendent, not immanent, personal and entering into personal relations with Man, not materialistic, is very faintly visible, if not rejected altogether.

And this is in the main Seneca's philosophic theory. He labours to identify the various terms employed and to justify Roman polytheism as well by the absorption of all divinities into the One First Cause. "Nature," "The Divine Reason pervading the whole Universe and its parts," the "author of all things," "Fate," for "Fate is nothing but the connected series of causes, and God is the First Cause of all things from which the rest depend," these are all the names of God. "Rightly, you may call him Jupiter, Optimus and

Maximus, and Thunderer, and Stator, Father Liber, and Hercules, and Mercurius." "Nature is not without God, nor God without Nature, but both are the same and have no different function." "Nature, Fate, Fortune, all are names of the same God using his power variously."

"You may call Him Nature, since by His breath we live, and from Him all things have their origin; or Fate, since all things depend from Him, who is the Cause of Causes; or Providence, since by His counsel is provision made for the Universe; or the Universe, since He is All that which you see, bestowed through His parts, and sustaining Himself and His properties." At the very outset, we mark the vagueness and variability of the dogmatic language which Seneca employs. His theory of the nature of God seems the orthodox Stoic Pantheistic material theory. But in passage after passage, he departs from it, insisting now on the "spiritual," "incorporeal," nature of God, and now using language as of the God of Christianity, of a personal, pitying, loving Deity, who "is worshipped and loved," who "is as a father to the good," by whose grace alone men are good, who "greatly loves the good and tries them by pain and affliction only to strengthen them." Such language may win men's hearts, but press the question home, and this God, who is no true Stoic God, recedes into the background, and God the Universe, God the Fate irrevocable, again presents Himself to the view. Man, as part of the Universe, cannot worship or love that which he partly forms. If he is dissociate from the Universe (a thing scarce credible), how can he love or worship the inanimate whole which regards him not a whit?[1]

No one insists more strongly than Seneca upon Death, and the universal lot, on the uncertainty of life, and its consequent vanity. "The longest life is but a moment of time, the shortest a complete whole." If the young die, "the brighter the fire, the quicker it fades away." "So we also, as soon as we were born, began to draw to our end." "Being made perfect in a little while, he fulfilled long years." Such sentiments can receive illustration after illustration from the Roman writer. And again and again Seneca insists on the joyfulness, the happy release, of death. The Positivist lament over an early death as of a Mozart or a Chatterton, depriving mankind of one of its servants too

[1] See note at end.

soon, finds no echo in the Stoic creed, where the personal individual aspect alone is regarded. But again, press the question home, and the sage gives but a hesitating answer to the one great question of the life after death, the Immortality of the Soul. Seneca's wont is to propound both views, as Socrates in his last great speech. Death is either the annihilation of consciousness or a change for the better, the release of the spirit from the encumbrance of the flesh. In either case then, it is gain not loss. In the latter case, the soul soars above the regions of earth into realms celestial, acquiring perfect bliss and perfect knowledge. "They see, moreover, the straitness and the painfulness from which they have been delivered, and rejoice." Rejecting the creed of many Stoics and his own creed at other times, that the soul like the body is corporeal, and therefore perishes at death, Seneca, in his anxiety to comfort the mourners, and in the affection of his humanity, depicts Death as the liberation of the soul from the body. "Thy son," he cries to a bereaved mother, "is not dead. It is but his image which is perished. He himself lives for ever, in a more blessed state, stripped of alien encumbrances." "The body is but the prison-house and darkness of the soul." A brief purgation from the stains of mortal life follows after death, and after that the happy soul joins the glorious company of heroes, and looks down from the heights of heaven upon the deep places of the earth. "Thy brother," he writes to the freedman Polybius, "has not lost the light, but has obtained a purer light. That road is common to us all. Why should we mourn his fate? He hath not left us; he hath but gone before."

> "Largior hic campos aether et lumine vestit
> Purpureo, solemque suum, sua sidera norunt."

This is also Seneca's belief in the life after death, when he forgets his creed and sets out upon the path of consolation.

Yet time after time he hesitates, harking back to the old alternative, and refusing his final choice. The old tales indeed of "Cerberus and the darkness and the ghostly habit" he rejects as scornfully as does Plato. But on the main questions he refuses judgment. "Death either consumes us or liberates us. Either is a good. Wherefore then should we grieve?" This is his constant theme. At the opening of one letter he speaks of the Immortality of the Soul as a "beautiful dream," a hope, but nothing more. Yet his eloquence carries

him away and he descants at the close upon the "New Birth when we pass from death unto life." "That day which thou fearest as thy last is the birthday of thine eternity, when the mists of the earth shall pass away, the secrets of nature be at length revealed, and clear light shall shine on every side."

In fact, the Stoics themselves were divided on this question. Chrysippus permitted the souls of the wise to survive after death. Cleanthes extended the privilege to every soul. Seneca combines all views in his own person, though with least insistence upon Cleanthes' opinion. There is never a clear note struck in all his eloquence. And he himself, when the news of death arrived, argued again the old, old question, but left us no certain hope nor statement of belief. At the best, he can exhort struggling humanity to be virtuous, and the Gods *may* reward virtue with immortality.

And that very immortality is expressly limited in its duration. By one great article of the Stoic creed Seneca holds ever resolutely. There should in due course come one great day of conflagration and destruction which should consume the whole existing Universe, wherein even the very souls of the blest should be resolved into their primitive elements, at such a time as it should please God to finish with the old and make all things new. The lines put into Seneca's mouth in the "Octavia" sum up the view which the philosopher himself expresses at length:

> Nunc ades mundo, dies
> Supremus ille, qui premas genus impium
> Caeli ruina, rursus ut stirpem novam
> Generat renascens melior, ut quondam tulit
> Juvenis, tenente regna Saturno poli.

Until in due course should come the day of reconstitution of all things, and a new and innocent human race should reappear upon a newly constituted earth, to be again in turn corrupted and degenerate, and the eternal cycle of events runs its never-changing course again. Even the immortality of consciousness vaguely promised to the mourners must suffer these limits in the Stoic's boldest experiment of hope.[1]

Meanwhile, Man in his lifetime is declared to owe duty both to God and to his fellow. To God or the Gods (Seneca

[1] See note at end.

uses the terms indifferently) he owes worship. "The first act of worship is to believe that they exist; the next, to make requital of their majesty and of their goodness; to know that it is they who keep watch over the world, who guide all things by their power, who have the wardship of the human race, and sometimes are thoughtful for single men (or "curious of single acts"). He worships the Gods who imitates them. He worships God who knows Him."

Yet such maxims claim at least a partially intelligible God or Gods before they can appeal to man's reason or his conscience. God is adored by service. It is hard for man to know when he serves Him. It is impossible to force the claim if he knows not Whom he serves, whether He be one or many, Spirit or Matter, the Stoic's Universe or the Stoic's Regent. The Stoics could not exhibit even a partial revelation of God. How could they justify their claim on Man that he should adore?

Man's duty to his neighbour is again based on maxim and presented with eloquence. There are no certain foundations of the faith. "How should we live toward Men? Keep our hands clean of human blood? How small a thing is it to refrain from harming one to whom we should render service! Truly it is greatly to be commended if man is merciful to man! Shall we bid him reach out his hand to the shipwrecked, show the way to those who wander, divide his bread with the hungry? Why detail all the minutiæ of right when one brief rule sums human duty? All that we see is one, and we are all members of one great body. Nature bore us akin to one another. From the same elements we came, and to the same we proceed. She bestows therefore upon us love, one for another. By her law it is more grievous to do evil than to suffer it. By her command our hands are prompt to help one another. Human society is like some arch, which must fall if man stands not shoulder to shoulder beside his brother, but is strong in virtue of this."

What proof was there of this to the Roman who proposed to deny the thesis and claim one right only, that of his own comfort? There was, perhaps, experience. But Roman patriotism might contradict this, or, at least, if the smooth Cosmopolitan denied this argument, the objector might be allowed to put his own counter theory to this same test of experience. Certainly he did so, and the Stoic precepts won

few adherents. "We are members one of another." A pretty maxim, but on what basis does the preacher establish it? Nature? Who or what is this personified Nature that it should command? Humanity? An abstract idea at the best, and its concrete instances only too liable to scorn and rejection. In a man's own life, even in the wise man's life, many misfortunes befall him. He falls into the snares of pain and sorrow and suffering. How can this be reconciled with the Providence which in Seneca's humaner teaching watches over the affairs of man? All creeds must face the problem, and, since in its intenser forms none have a perfect solution of it save in faith alone, Stoicism here labours in an angry sea, which buffets other barks as well before they can reach harbour. Seneca denies that any ill can befall by anger or cruelty of the Gods. Yet, to say that such happens by the "Law of our Mortality" helps us forward very little. For the fact of this mortality is not its consolation. Elsewhere the philosopher grapples stoutly but confusedly with the problem. He is, of course, limited by his creed to the facts of this life, and, indeed, no virile morality can be based upon a doctrine of compensations. And this applies to passion as well as to action, though in the former case such a doctrine has the greater justification and does the smaller hurt. But ill and suffering, Seneca maintains, must in large measure be but seeming or minor ills compared with greater goods. The Gods allow them to befall the good now for discipline's sake, to strengthen them in resolution and in character, now to afford them opportunity for the exercise and manifestation of virtue, and now to serve as examples of the distinction between real and apparent goods. "God preserves the good from wrong-doing, vice, and evil thoughts. Is He also to keep their Bank account?"

And if the ills get over great to bear, one remedy remains. "He concludeth stoically. If thou dislike it and canst not abide it, who holdeth thee? The door is open; get thee out."[1] The Stoic doctrine of Suicide was plentifully illustrated in the Principate of Nero. Men slew themselves for many reasons, to escape old age, for sheer ennui,—

> Ci-gît Jean Rosbif, écuyer
> Qui se pendit pour se désennuyer—

for motives which Seneca heartily condemns. There was a

[1] Lipsius on De Providentia.

veritable "libido moriendi," a "lust for death." "Any ignoramus will believe the false doctrine 'Bella res est mori sua morte'—'it is a fair thing to die by death self-given.'" "To slay oneself for grief's sake is to admit defeat. He is weak-minded and a coward who dies on account of pain. But he is foolish who lives for pain's sake."

If pain or evil or suffering hinder and will for ever hinder all that which alone makes life worth the living, then suicide is the easiest privilege which God has bestowed on man. It is an escape from servitude, a facile desirable way of liberty. "Let us give thanks to God for that none can be forced to live." "To plead in torment or disgrace that while there is life there is hope is the cry of an effeminate craven." "The sage liberates himself if many things befall him to disturb him and overthrow his tranquillity."

> "Henceforth I fly not death, nor would prolong
> Life much, bent rather how I may be quit,
> Fairest and easiest, of this cumbrous charge."

"There was no nobler sight for Jupiter upon earth," declares Seneca, "than that of Cato, undaunted, erect amid the ruins of his country, holding ever in his own power the way of liberty and escape, releasing his soul by that sword wherewith he so nobly had served others. Death consecrateth those whose end they praise, who themselves fear to undergo the like." "He who condemns suicide closes the way of liberty. Each man owes account of his life to others, of his death to himself alone."[1]

"In nullum reipublicae usum," a Tacitus might say scornfully, and we might repeat it not only of Cato's later imitators but even of Cato himself. But if Stoicism could ever accept such a test, might it not plead the duty to the Republic of Man of so shining an example? Yet once admit others' claims upon the individual life, and the question presents a very different aspect. The existence of a man's vested right or property in his own life and death may be challenged. It is just as easy to break your neighbour's windows as your own, but the superior power of the law takes a different view of the proceeding. Or, to change the metaphor, a man cannot destroy a leasehold so lightly as he can a freehold tenement, even though the same amount of dynamite serves either case. Stoicism, however, preferred in

[1] See note at end.

this connection to view a man's life in isolation. But even so it had been better to define Tranquillity's essentials before pleading its claims as suicide's justification. Possibly it might be found incapable of disturbance. And further, suicide as the last resort from ill is reserved by the Stoic as the exclusive privilege of the sage, who alone knows when he may have resort to it. The many who suffer grievous ill and come to Stoicism for consolation must go even without this remedy away.

The sage alone has joy of Stoicism and its comforts. His creed is a virile and a noble one. "Death shall not move me. No toils, however great, shall distress me. Riches I scorn, whether present or absent. Fortune concerns me not, whether she comes or whether she goes. Nature has given all to me and me to all. I will do all things not for opinion's but for conscience' sake. I will eat and drink but to satisfy Nature's wants, and not to fill my belly. To friends I will do kindness, to foes show mercy and long-suffering. My pardon shall be given before the offender asks for it. The World is my Country; the Gods are its rulers and judge my every word and deed. And when that Nature shall claim or Reason release my spirit, I will depart this life with the testimony that I have loved a good conscience and honest studies, neither has any man's liberty been lessened by me, and least of all mine own." And the Stoic declares his imperturbability his chiefest prize, his victory the noblest victory, gained "not over Persians or distant Medes or warlike tribes beyond the Dahae, but over avarice and ambition and the fear of death, which conquers the conquerors of men."[1]

"But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." Not the wit nor the judgment nor the deceit of man can reconcile here St Paul and Seneca.

The three great defects of Seneca's Stoicism which made its appeal to the hearts and the understanding of his generation of but small avail were its uncertainty, its impassivity, and its self-sufficiency. Man asked for faith and was given doubt. He sought sympathy, and was presented with the picture of an impossible ideal of calm and complacent indifference. He knew himself unable to stand alone, and was assured that there was no other salvation save in himself

[1] See note at end.

alone. He knew that the path to virtue was a hard one, and was informed that it was easy—for the sage. He asked who the sage might be, and found him passionless, without anger at evil doer or evil deed, for that "so many were they who committed evil, so few, so very few in all the ages, who acquired wisdom." He craved comfort in grief, or consolation in melancholy, and discovered that his very grief and melancholy were proof that he too lacked wisdom. He upbraided the Stoic sect as hard and as unfeeling, and was assured that he did it an injustice. True, the sage could never weep with those who wept. "His mind is calm, nor can anything disturb his equanimity. Not even by his own sorrows can he be troubled or downcast. How then may he be by others'? Always he presents the same face to the world, placid and undistraught. He will wipe away others' tears, not add his own to them; stretch out his hand to the shipwrecked, harbour the exile, feed the hungry, not with that commiseration which insults the feelings of the poor, but as man helping his brother man. He will restore a son to a weeping mother, loose men out of prison, give burial even to the polluted, all with calm mind and undisturbed countenance. He cannot be distressed for another's withered limb, or ragged hunger, or old age limping with its staff." "What," asks the inquirer, "can we remain happy and untroubled when we see the wicked in so great prosperity, evil triumphant, and right vanquished?" "Nay," replies the sage, "this is matter for laughter rather than for tears. Of what avail is weeping? Nothing is worth such sorrow. Better still, accept the facts of human life calmly, and add not to them laughter or lament." The sorrowful must win this impassivity by refusing to admit a cause for sorrow. The suffering must gain wisdom and then find perhaps the remedy in self-destruction. The sinful (and men may feel a sense of sin who may not define it) must purify himself. He returns his soul to God with pride saying, "Behold, I return thee my soul better than when thou gavest it to me." "What need of prayers? Make thyself happy." This Stoic self-sufficiency is the Stoic doctrine of redemption. If a man feel himself incapable, and in all ages there have been such men, whether wise or foolish, for him Stoicism had no message. He falls back into the common herd.

All philosophies and all religions owe a debt to mankind, that of the satisfaction of men's needs and men's demands.

And Stoicism for all its contented self-complacency failed to discharge this debt. A certain homely tale which Seneca tells has herein a sting for the teller and his school.

> "A certain Pythagorist had upon his credit bought a pair of clownish shoes of a cobbler (a great matter I warrant you). Some few days after he came unto the shop to make satisfaction, and when he had long time knocked at the door, there was one that answered him: Why lose you your labour? That cobbler you seek is carried out and burned. This may be a grief to us which lose our friends for ever, but not to you that know that he shall be born anew. Thus jested he at the Pythagorist.
>
> "But our philosopher carried home his three or four pence very merrily, shaking them divers times in his hands as he went homeward. Afterwards, accusing himself of the pleasure he had conceived in non-payment, and perceiving how much that little gain of his was pleasing to him, he returned to the shop and said unto himself: He liveth to thee; pay thou that which thou owest. With that word he thrust the four pence into the shop at a cranny of the wall, where the closing of the panel was shrunk, chastising himself for his cursed avarice, lest he should accustom himself to detain another man's goods."[1]

"What thou owest, ask to whom thou shalt pay it." But the philosopher satisfied in his own righteousness went away the second time more merrily, leaving the coins lost and the debt in very truth undischarged. And the cobbler's children went hungry.[2]

If Ethics to-day are the least popular branch of philosophy, it is perhaps because the moral philosopher, no longer so content to expound or apply the Christian doctrines in the light of philosophical tenets as was the mediaeval Doctor, attempts a systematisation independent of religion, and men will always turn first to their religion for the rules of conduct, and find therein the only sanction for that which they conceive to be right action. If their religion fails to give them sufficient satisfaction, then they may come knocking at the doors of Moral Philosophy and ask for rules and sanction as well. If Stoicism in the days of Seneca was unpopular, if it

[1] De Benef. viii. 21, Trans. Lodge. [2] See note at end.

"consisted of isolated individuals" and "never attracted the masses,"[1] this was due to its failure to supply both rules of conduct for the many and a sanction for their observance. Add that it lacked sympathy and vaunted its superiority, and we can understand a little why it failed to redeem the Roman world from doubt or careless idle living.

And to its unpopularity, to the scorn felt for philosophy in general in Rome and Italy under Nero, Seneca himself bears eloquent witness. Academicians, he laments, Sceptics, Pythagoreans, all were extinct schools. The study of philosophy was a mere "vacation in the games." "Philosophiae nulla cura est." The theatre at Naples was ever crammed. The house of Metronax the philosopher was well nigh empty. The Roman would "die of laughing if a wanton plucked a Cynic by the beard." The very name of philosophy was unpopular. "He never listened to a philosopher" is the crown of a burlesque epitaph upon a rich bourgeois. The Stoic could and did lay the flattering unction to his soul that Virtue never pleased the popular taste, that popularity could be won only by evil arts, that you must needs make yourself like the man in the street to win his favour. "The people will not approve of the philosopher unless they are ignorant of him." This is exactly Stoicism's condemnation, and it is no true excuse. The mocker, despite Persius, was not to be scornfully left "to his daily paper and a ballet-girl." If the people was so depraved, this was at once a call for some influence to amend it (for so also like could approximate to like) and a condemnation of the philosophy or religion which refused the task. If Stoicism failed to answer to the call, and becomes subject to the condemnation, we have sought for the causes in Seneca's own preaching.[2]

§ 3. Persius

The second representative of didactic Stoicism in the Principate of Nero is the poet Persius. Here only his philosophic teaching and the still more typical attitude which he assumed towards the men of his own day concern us. Characteristically Roman in his choice of poetry as a vehicle for instruction, he rids himself less successfully of the

[1] Bishop Lightfoot. [2] See note at end.

constraint which philosophy always imposes upon poetry than other Roman poets, but his poetic manner and crabbedness are not here subject of consideration. Neither is there any credible evidence of political intent of any kind in his six short satires, which alone remain extant. Those who would discover in them covert attacks upon the Emperor build upon a very unstable basis.

Aulus Persius Flaccus was born on Dec. 4 A.D. 34 at the Etruscan hill-city of Volaterrae, and the cold strength and the sober gloom of his native town seem reflected in his verse. He moved to Rome twelve years later and soon as a boy began to write poetry. Noble, gentle, fair to look upon, and shy, he became one of a little philosophical and poetical circle of men and women, and lived therein almost as a recluse, as "a neophyte who looks out at an unknown world from a Stoic cloister,"[1] writing verse slowly and painfully, buried in his studies, avoiding public life and contention, the pupil and friend of Cornutus the Stoic,[2] companion of Thrasea, acquaintance of, but antipathetic to, Seneca, admiring of and admired by his own coterie. He was wealthy, and when he like Burns apologises that he never drank "Castalia's stream and a' that," and pleads hunger as his excuse for writing, this was a merely mocking prelude which had no basis in fact. Sober, modest, unassuming, living quietly and happily with his mother and sisters, of unaffected moral earnestness and zeal, whereby he utters platitude with a conviction and force which go far to excuse it, he remains a curiously isolated figure in the age of Nero. He died quite young on November 24 A.D. 62, aged not quite twenty-eight, leaving no small wealth, a large library, mostly of philosophy, and a few little unfinished poems, the product of his later years. These were edited for publication by Cornutus and another of his friends, one Caesius Bassus, and when published won at once great fame among the more polished classes in Rome.

The poet's chief subject is the earnest praise of philosophy and its lessons. The price to be paid by the poet for this dismays him not at all. "No one," he represents himself in his first satire as being told "will listen to your poetry unless you write indecently." He replies that his audience will be small, it is true, but none the less a few select lovers of the old spirit which lashed the vices of the day will hearken to him. As for the rest, they are but Philistines whose

[1] R. Y. Tyrrell, Latin Poetry, p. 231. [2] *Cf. supra*, pages 232, 262.

"spiritual condition is desperate,"[1] and of them he will take no notice. Then he addresses himself to the task of attack. First men's prayers to the Gods, betokening their unworthy conceptions of their Deities, pass under his scornful review, and he mocks the uselessness of costly sacrifice. "The age is mad after gold. We gild the very faces of our Gods. We seek it from the mine and oyster shell.

'O curvae in terris animae et caelestium inanes.'

Why believe that the Gods share the lusts of our sinful flesh? Money we get thereby, sinful though it be. But what good do we get, you Priests, from the money we squander in your temples? As large reward as maidens from the dolls they offer to Venus? Bring we to the Gods an honest and an upright heart, and a handful of meal is enough to win their favour."[2] The priests indeed suffer at this youth's hands, whereas Seneca, the old philosopher and statesman, spares them. "What," cries Persius to his supposed heir in a quaint defence of spending all one's income, "do you expect me to live on pork and cabbage and on a feast-day too, that some young scoundrel grandson of yours in days to come may gorge himself on paté de foie gras? Am I to be worn to a shadow that he may roll along fat as a priest?"[3]

From priest and worshipper the poet in the most spirited of his satires turns to the young well-born idler.

"Come!" says the visitor, "eleven o'clock in the morning and still snoring? Last night's wine, eh?"

"What! eleven! Come and dress me, one of you fellows. Where the deuce are they all got to? My head's splitting!" And our young aristocrat flies out of bed in a towering rage.

"Then he sets to and pretends to work. But the ink goes wrong. It is always 'too thick or too thin.' He is just a big baby, always wanting some one to wait on him. 'How can I work with a pen like this?' He's only deceiving himself and wasting his time. He rings quite false. But what's the hurt? He's a gentleman blessed with independent means."

"It is enough to trace your descent back to the thousandth generation, is it? To ride a good horse on parade? That finery is all very well for the mob. But I can see underneath, mere sot that you are, waxed fat, stupid, ignorant.

[1] Tyrrell, *op. cit.* p. 237. [2] Sat. 2, especially v. 50-75.
[3] Sat. 6, v. 73-75.

You are your own punishment at any rate, like the tyrants for whom we pray ever

'Virtutem videant intabescantque relicta.'

Is anything more terrible than conscience whispering quietly all the while 'Going down hill, Going down hill fast!'"

"I really cannot help it," says he. "I learnt nothing useful at school."

"Ah, but you have since you left! The highest lessons and warnings of philosophy. And the result? Snore and yawn and nodding head after the wine last night."

"Come, have you *no* aim in life? Do you propose to throw stones at sparrows all day long? Set to work and learn what God intended you to be, what part He meant you to play in the world. Your successful barrister will make more money, no doubt, but you need not envy him for all that. Then comes your army sergeant and your athlete, and they mock at the 'idle mouthings of old dotard philosophers.' 'Is a man,' they ask scornfully, 'to go without dinner for this kind of stuff? What's the good of it all?'"

"Very well then! Please yourself and die of a surfeit. Call in your doctor in a hurry and obey him for a day or two. Then when you feel better cast his warnings to the winds. Result? The poor dear departed has a very fine funeral. 'A stroke, and at dinner too? Dear! dear!'"

"But my health is all right. To what end is all this pretty story?" "What! Your heart beats quicker at sight of gold or the smile of a pretty girl? Can your teeth manage bully beef and biscuit? You shiver with fear, get hot with anger? And then you call yourself healthy. Healthy!"[1]

Neither can the young politician avoid Persius' gibing. The darling of the electorate harangues the mob with assurance on every possible topic, is cock-sure and knows everything. The whole constituency is ringing with his praises. "Mayn't I believe myself a fine fellow?" he asks indignantly. "You! luxurious, greedy, a libertine! Instead of thirstily courting the cheers of every Tom, Dick and Harry in the market-place, come go home and stay there quietly for a little, and try to realise what a mean sorrily-furnished little creature you are."[2]

"Many indeed," writes the poet, "and diverse are men's lives and their desires. But the midnight study of wisdom alone

[1] Sat. 3. [2] Sat. 4.

leads to satisfaction at the last. Only from the Stoic seed can a fair harvest come. Pursue after this, ye young men and old men, and put it not off till to-morrow, that to-morrow which always outruns you and mocks your vain pursuit.

"'But what we really want is freedom,' you say. Yes, but what freedom? To live modestly, wisely, not greedy, not covetous, master of your passions and desires, this only is true freedom. If you know not this, you are a fool for all your philosophic seeming, and a clodhopper might learn to dance as quickly as you learn wisdom. No freedom for you, no, nor the rights of freedom.

"'Mere nonsense! I *am* free. I know it.'

"'Pray, and how do you know it? Because you have no master? How about the masters within you?'

"You are snoring comfortably. 'Get up!' says Avarice. 'Not I.' 'Get *up*.' 'Why should I?' 'Come, be quick! Make money! Trade! Traffic! Cheat! Only do bestir yourself and make money.' You give in. 'Quick, my men, this bag, this flask. Now aboard ship!'

"'One moment!' says Luxury, 'why all this hurry and scurry? *You* go a-voyaging? *You* sit on the rope-coil on deck and drink your wine with a fine flavour of tar about it? And all for a trifle of interest? Come, be sensible. Take your ease. Eat, drink, and be merry!'

"Poor fellow, you don't know which advice to take. But where's your freedom anyway?

"Make a stand for once, like yonder young lord. 'I really will give up this intrigue now, Davus!' says he to his slave. 'I won't go hammering on my mistress' door at dead o' night any more. But you don't think she will cry much, do you?' he asks anxiously. 'Cry! Much more likely to box your ears! Now *don't* linger.' 'But suppose she begs me, prays me, implores me to come again?'

"Ah, what a valiant stand, in very truth. Look at your genuine free man, found at last!

"Say all this in the sergeants' mess and they roar with laughter. 'Greek philosophers, one farthing apiece,' cries your brawny trooper in huge scorn."[1]

Persius, indeed, is commonplace in thought, if forcible in expression. But his interest to the historian resides exactly in his limitations and exaggerations. For whom does the Stoic poet feel the least sympathy, save his own little

[1] Sat. 5. especially v. 50-70 and 90-191.

philosophic clientèle only? The army and everything connected with it he loathes with a peculiarly intense hatred. But it is not only the officer and sergeant whom he mocks. The politician in the capital or the humbler yet proud administrator in a little local city, the trader, the common round and daily task, all fade away into the contemptuous background of the earnest preacher's thought, who sees self-mastery as the one great prize and philosophic study as the sole avenue of approach to it. In a lesser degree than Seneca, but hardly less clearly, Persius exhibits the self-sufficiency, the self-complacency, the narrowness, the absence of sympathy, in Stoicism. If he is less uncertain, it is because he shuns all dogma altogether and reproduces moral precepts only, which in themselves are, it must be confessed, very, very stale and very, very trite. "Christianity," declares a French writer, "pursued its subterranean path among the poor: Stoicism conquered the best part of Roman society."[1] The Stoic played of a surety an honourable part. But his creed and preaching did not reach below the surface alike of thought and of society, and herein resided Stoicism's failure.

§ 4. Roman Pleasures

With the circle of the Roman Stoics it was, to employ a great writer's comparison, "as with the circle the necromancer draws around him—very strange appearances may be seen in active motion outside." From that circle are excluded not the poor only, but all of the other classes who never strove to attain to the wisdom of the sage. Not even to the comfortable and rich, to the middle and upper classes, did Stoicism fulfil its mission.

Epicureanism was expressed in the Principate of Nero in practice rather than in precept, and all the more zealously in practice as its rival's precepts cast both thinkers and thoughtless into its hospitable arms. The very strange appearances in active motion outside the charmed circle took shapes of ease, luxury, debauchery and cruelty, of pleasures in various forms and garbs, which rioted with mirth well nigh unchecked, until at last a greater power invaded and attacked them from the vast void outside. Meanwhile the disciples of Epicurus, for the most part perhaps un-

[1] Martha, *op. cit.* p. 128.

conscious pupils, justified Seneca's reproaches of the Master's doctrines and defied his counter spells. For Epicurus himself the Stoic leader had no small admiration. Seneca quotes his maxims freely, "spying," as he says, "into the enemy's camp." But he does valiant battle with the great theory of Pleasure as man's chief good. "Of course," he writes, "Epicurus' own 'Pleasure' was sober enough and inseparable from virtue. His precepts were right, and even melancholy." "'Tis almost the saying of a Man," he cries of one of Epicurus' sayings with compelled if reluctant admiration. "But when men hear that pleasure cannot be separated from virtue, straightway they conclude that all their pleasures are virtuous. They attach, therefore, the name of 'philosophy' to their vices, and lose the one merit which they possessed, that of shame. Now that they can give a high sounding justification to their misdeeds, they flaunt them openly in men's faces. Deservedly, therefore, the sect of Epicurus has an evil reputation. The Master could not control his disciples. The life might be upright, but the watchword of the creed was terribly misleading and harmful." "Virtue cannot for one moment be compared with pleasure. She spurns it afar off, and harbours rather with toil and suffering, the hardships worthy of a man."[1]

The evidence of so stalwart a foe of the doctrine of Pleasure as to its cult and fashion in Rome might labour under some suspicion, were it not confirmed many times over by Epicurus' own most noteworthy and brave disciple Petronius. As it is, the historian must delineate the life of luxury in Rome from the two sources with equal confidence, if not with the "extremely minute and circumstantial"[2] precision of the Christian Fathers in the censures which they passed upon it in their day. Only no age which enjoys wealth and leisure can condemn the fact apart from the form of luxury in an earlier age or other nation without incurring, at least in part, the sober answer, "De te fabula narratur."

The rich employed their riches at Rome in various pleasures. Some fell hopeless victims to the insatiable passion of the Art Collector. "Aes paucorum insania pretiosum," says Seneca with scorn. Others cultivated their voices with anxious assiduity. Some were always to be seen in the wrestling ring or training school of athletes. Others devoted all their time to cattle breeding. Chess and billiards

[1] See note at end. [2] Gibbon.

after Roman fashion claimed all such time as some could spare from the bath. Many lounged lazily, enjoying life in the sunlight all day long. More literary hobbies appropriated others. "We have caught the infection from the Greeks," declares Seneca ruefully. "They too were always asking how many oarsmen Ulysses had, whether Iliad or Odyssey was written first, whether they were by the same author, studies of such a kind, in fact, that if you keep them to yourself they yield you no satisfaction at all, if you discuss them with others you are thought not so much more learned but so much the more a bore. This trivial superfluity of learning has now caught hold on us. Only the other day I heard a man detailing 'the very first' of all the Romans to do certain things, to win a sea fight, to use elephants in a triumph, to let lions loose in the arena, and so forth. What *is* the good of such studies? Better perhaps study nothing at all than be engrossed in such pursuits." The honour paid to learning also led to expensive imitations. So Calvisius Sabinus, "a rich man in our day, with the patrimony of a freedman and his intellect as well," was sorely troubled by a bad memory, yet had a passion for quotation. "So he devised this short cut to learning. He bought slaves at a great price, one to take charge of Homer, another of Hesiod, and one besides for each of the nine lyric poets. He could not find them at once. He must needs contract for their manufacture, and pay a hundred thousand sesterces apiece for them. Then when at last he got his family together, what an infliction was he to his guests! Now he would demand one, now another, apt quotation, and often, though given it, he would stick fast in the middle of repeating it. He was fitly requited one day when he complained of sickly health. 'Why,' quoth Satellius the jester, 'say not so! See how many lusty slaves you have!'"

Another form of this literary zeal was the purchase of large libraries. "Look," Seneca writes, "at these huge libraries of countless books. Their owners can scarcely read their title-pages only. This is but useless luxury, a boast of knowledge, a superfluity of pretended learning or display. The man ignorant of the very elements of letters buys books to ornament his dining-room. Another goes hunting about for book-cupboards of citrus wood and ivory, collecting masses of works unknown or indecent, and sits yawning among them. It is the idlest man who owns every speech and every history

published, whose bookcases reach up to the ceiling. The library now is like the bathroom, a necessary feature of the house. If this craving for books were due to a passion for letters one could pardon it. But nowadays books, like authors' busts, are bought only to make a brave show on the walls."

More money, however, was expended upon dinners than on books, and the dinner became to many the chief business of their lives. A man's reputation for taste and elegance depended on the style in which he lived, the skill of his slaves, the beauty of his plate, the delicacy of his fare. "You cannot eat and drink without challenging some rival." Apicius in Seneca's time, "the professor of the Science of the Cookshop," was a gourmand who after spending vast sums upon his table poisoned himself when his fortune diminished rather than continue to live upon a petty sum of ten million sesterces, nearly £90,000 of our money. The remotest corners of the earth, declares Seneca, were ransacked for dainties possible and impossible. The philosopher waxes indignant at the ice-shops springing up in every quarter to supply the needs of diners who added suppers on to dinners and feasted till morning dawned, and at the scenes which accompanied such revelry. "Vomunt ut edant; edunt ut vomant." "Was this fish caught to-day? It is too serious a question for me to take your word for it. I must see it caught myself. Once it was said, 'There is no daintier fare than a rock mullet.' Now our fops say, 'What is so beautiful as a dying mullet? Let me hold the bowl in my hand and see it jumping and gasping.' It is drawn out of the bright crystal fish-pond, and the experts come crowding round. 'Look at that brilliant red,' cries one, ''tis sharper than vermilion.' 'See its veins there: you would say its belly was all blood.' 'Ah, look at that clear dark blue!' urges a second. 'It is dying now; the colours are growing pale; all are merging into one.' And not a single one of these gentry will sit at a dying friend's bedside or bear to behold a father's death. Their kinsfolk pass away in loneliness, for they are away to see 'the prettiest sight, if you please, in the world,' a mullet dying. Teeth, palate, stomach are not enough now for cookshop work. Gluttony demands the eyes as well." And, since the conversation must match the fare, young slave-jesters must be specially trained and bought to wait at table. The more spicy and flavoured their wit, the greater was the host's reputation.

Luxury of dress and personal adornment was common to men as to women. "The barber claims hours each day. Who would not rather have his property disordered than his curls?" "The dowry which the Senate in the old days of happy poverty bestowed on Scipio's daughters would not to-day suffice to buy a freedman's little girl a mirror." "A woman's ears nowadays must be laden with a string of pearls to each, their price a double or a triple patrimony. Her silken and transparent robes serve but to display the body underneath." For chastity and modesty had long since fled from fashionable Rome. If we may credit Seneca, conjugal fidelity was the last and extremest sign of stupidity and low taste. Divorce was a reason for, well nigh an indispensable prelude to, marriage. "Our noblest dames reckon the years not by the consuls' names, but by their husbands." Every lady of spirit must count her favourites by the score, and chastity was proof only of deformity. Child-bearing and motherhood were cause for shame, the only cause for blushing. Children were disliked by mother and father as well. Childless old age was a veritable 'kingdom' in a court of flatterers. It was the father who went lonely. Sickly children or ill-formed were promptly drowned like kittens. So in Petronius' romance "Croton," says a countryman to the shipwrecked strangers, "has but two classes of inhabitants, the flatterers and the flattered, and the sole crime in the city is to beget and bring up children, to whom to bequeath your money. 'Tis like a battle-field at rest, nought but corpses picked by the crows, and the crows which pick them."

While the wealthy thus enjoyed life in their palaces, outside, the hovels and dirty streets of old Rome were swarming with a tumultuous and strangely mixed throng. "Men have poured into the city from every part of the inhabited world. Some ambition has brought, others luxury and the search for vicious pleasure, others love of liberal studies, others the games. Some have come for friendship's sake, others for industry's. Some have brought their eloquence for sale, others their beauty." "Once December was the month of merry-making. Now the whole year is Saturnalia." Here might be seen "a crowd of hungry clients jostling and fighting at the door of some sleepy patron, forcing their way in while he slipped out at a private entrance, or, if he stayed, scarcely deigned to notice their eager repeated whispering of his name by raising his eyelids heavy after last night's debauch." There

a curious crowd is gathered round some quack or religious fanatic, "shaking his sistrum or cutting himself with knives. Here some hag creeps howling through the city on her knees, or a hoary-haired old man rushes brandishing a burning torch at midday, crying aloud that some deity is angered." The folk crowded into the amphitheatre and revelled in the bloodshed. The noble who would throw his boy slave to the lampreys in his fish-pond to be nibbled by them to death was worthy of the common folk which raged angrily when a gladiator sought to save his life or would not gladly die. Small wonder that some victims cheated the savage mob, devising the most desperate expedients of death before they reached the arena.[1]

From Seneca's evidence concerning Rome's life and pleasures we turn to Petronius' Romance and find in it curious confirmation.

§ 5. The Romance of Petronius[2]

The work of Petronius, whose career and death have been already narrated, is preserved to us in part only. But even the small portion extant of the romance, which when complete must have consisted of at least sixteen books, serves to illustrate at once the character of the whole, the life of the times, and, incidentally, the taste of the excerptors. The title "Satirae" merely refers to the blend of prose and verse, after the fashion of the "Menippean Satires," of which the Romance, as we might more fitly entitle it, consists.

For the "Satire," as it now stands, narrates the adventures by land and sea, at Puteoli, and at Croton, of a few amatory youths. The thread of connection between the various parts is probably borrowed as a burlesque from the Odyssey, the anger of the God of Indecency Priapus pursuing Encolpius, the young hero, as Poseidon's wrath harried Odysseus.[3] The Romance is frankly, unashamedly, in well nigh one-third of the extant chapters impossibly, indecent. The lowest possible types and details of passion play in it the part appropriated to romantic love in the modern novel or melodrama. Its *amours de voyage* remain so incredibly nauseous to modern

[1] See note at end. [2] See note at end.
[3] *Cf.* especially § 139. Thomas, however, p. 31, denies this.

taste that a French writer confesses ingenuously that "On lit Pétrone, on ne le cite pas."[1] The pen, therefore, of the modern historian, who would portray the life of the age of Nero in the lower bourgeois circles in the country towns (which modelled themselves of a certainty in Petronius' characterisation, and probably also in fact, upon Rome), and would depict the taste and behaviour of "les petites gens," is badly hampered from the first. Neither can he appeal either to the imagination or the experience of the modern reader.

Thus Petronius' Romance "marks the culminating point of Roman immorality."[2] It was doubtless "written to please the unhealthy curiosity and depraved imagination of Nero's Court, if not 'pour animer les plaisirs du Prince.'"[3] "His audience expected to be amused, and indecency was the recognised method of amusing it."[4] The Romance is truly described as the "humorous history of a band of robbers and debauchees, betraying the most profound corruption, and so much the more immoral than Juvenal and Martial, inasmuch as the vice portrayed never provokes in Petronius any feeling of disgust or any display of anger."[5]

With all this, the Romance attained in ancient and in modern times, and especially in France, a widespread popularity. There were indeed other causes besides for this. It is wonderfully realistic, humorous, lively, original. Its geniality, its verve, its esprit, its vagabond grace, have extorted the liveliest appreciation from very different critics. As an original work of Roman literature without the least trace of any Greek influence it is both unique and incomparable. Scenes in it are romantic and gallant in a modern sense, and Macrobius justly can find a parallel to it only in the later work of Apuleius. About one-third of the extant portions is devoted to one incident only, the Dinner given by a rich retired freedman, Trimalchio by name, to a party of Roman guests, and here boisterous wit is actually combined with comparative decency.[6] And in Trimalchio himself, it has been said, not without justice, that Petronius has created a character as living as Falstaff or Don Quixote.[7] The escape of the adventurers from Puteoli is hardly to be surpassed for fun and for excitement.[8] And whatever else may fail the

[1] Duruy, iv. p. 46.
[2] Boissier, p. 285.
[3] Boissier, pp. 280, 285.
[4] *Ib.* p. 241.
[5] Collignon, p. 17, etc.
[6] §§ 27-78 out of 141.
[7] Thomas, p. 95.
[8] §§ 94-113.

author, his wit never plays him false. It seems hardly credible that a Roman should have written a brilliant romance which in certain respects finds no rival of its kind in the whole of Greek literature. Here we can but make selections, and those perhaps not the most characteristic selections, out of the fragments which are left to us of the whole romance.

The first scene of the story as it now exists opens at Puteoli, whither Encolpius has escaped after hazardous adventures at Massilia. With him have come Giton, a handsome boy of sixteen, and a friend Ascyltos. At Puteoli Encolpius, the narrator of the story, was openly lamenting the decay of all the arts, when he fell in with an old teacher of rhetoric named Agamemnon. "Eloquence is as dead as a door-nail since the turgid style came in from Asia. There's not a line of poetry written nowadays that will live. And since the 'short road to painting' was shipped over here from Egypt, that art has gone the same way too."

"So I declaimed in the colonnade, but Agamemnon interrupted me. 'My good young sir,' quoth he, 'as you seem more sensible than most, let me tell you it's not the teacher's fault. If his pupils are mad he must needs be mad too, or he will lecture to empty benches. Your angler must bait his hook with a bait the little fishes will nibble at, or he'll starve all day long on the rock by the river-side. It really is all the parents' fault. They are in such a desperate hurry nowadays and care only for the gift of ready speaking. There is no chance for the "Grand Style" nowadays. Here's a little impromptu of my own now in verse on this very subject :—

He who with love of learning bit
On studies great is bent,
Must frugal be in all his ways,
Not to the Court direct his gaze,
Nor woo his hosts with flattering praise
Nor drown wit in debaucheries,
Nor in the Pit applauding sit,
Nor music-hall frequent.
Whether he haunt the steep Tritonian mount,
Or land which Spartan colonists now till,
Or Sirens' home, he quaffs poetic fount
In earliest years and sips th' Homeric rill ;
Then, after lore Socratic gained, in ampler flight
He soars, nor shrinks with Demosthenic arms to fight.
Next let a Roman throng on him attend,
Of Greek relieve, and savour fresh infuse :

'Twixt times, him books shut up to forum send
Where Fortune in swift passing cries her news.
To him the song of War's alarms shall yield rich fare ;
Th' unconquered Tully's mighty words sonorous blare.
When such the goods of which thy mind hath bounteous store,
From breast Pierian words in ceaseless stream thou'llt pour.'

I was listening so attentively that I did not notice that Ascyltos had run away. But a noisy crowd of Agamemnon's pupils poured into the gardens and released me. So I ran after him." [1]

Adventures of a doubtful character, thieving, and a quarrel with a rustic in the market place, in which the police, hopeful themselves of gain, interfere, fill up the time of the three till supper-time at the inn. A hurly-burly at the door terrifies them, and in comes a maid followed by her mistress, Quartilla, at whose secret rites to the God Priapus Encolpius had been present. "Down she sate, burst into tears, clasped her hands till her finger-joints cracked. 'Poor lad,' she wept, while we looked on in great perplexity. 'Poor lad, what God have you not offended! Surely the Gods will show you no mercy, yet the countryside here is so full of Gods that you can find one easier than a man. On my knees I pray you, publish not abroad those rites which you, unhallowed one, beheld.' I promised her fervently. She covered me with kisses and turned at once from tears to smiles. 'I make a truce with you,' cried she, and burst into merry laughter."

Quartilla hurries all three off to her house, and a disorderly banquet follows. "The whole rout fell asleep, some on chairs, some on the floor, some propped up against the wall. The lights flickered and grew dim. Then I, who was nodding myself, saw two slaves enter, and go round robbing the room. But they upset and smashed a wine flagon. Table and all went over and a cup fell right on the head of one of the slumbering maids. Her cries awoke the company. But the thieves promptly stretched themselves out on the floor and snored hard, as if they had been all the while asleep themselves." [2]

Two days after, the three are invited by Agamemnon to come with him to dine with Trimalchio in his villa. As a preparation they sally out first to the baths, and there they find their future host, a bald old man in a bright red tunic and sandals, playing vigorously at fives with green balls.

[1] 1-5. [2] 16-22.

"One must get an appetite for dinner," he explains. His game finished, he is wrapped up in a scarlet blanket and carried off home in a litter, preceded by four runners, and a sedan chair with his favourite slave in it, "uglier even than his master." At his side a flute player walked, playing softly to him all the way.

They follow after and find the porter at the entrance, in a green robe and cherry coloured girdle, cleaning peas in a silver basin. Over the entrance hung a spotted magpie in a golden cage. "As I was gazing at all these I caught sight on the left of a huge dog chained, which alarmed me so that I nearly fell on my back and broke my leg. My companions roared with laughter, for it was only painted after all, and a large 'Cave Canem' over it. The whole entrance hall was full of paintings, hunting scenes, Trimalchio in long flowing hair, Apollo's wand in his hand, and Minerva leading him into Rome; scenes of his life in Rome, how he had risen to positions of trust and made his fortune by trade. At the further end was Mercury carrying him up by the chin to the magistrate's seat, Fortune with her horn of plenty, the three Fates, and the like." From the entrance hall they made their way to the dining-room, whose door-posts were covered with bombastic inscriptions and trophies.

There were some thirteen guests besides Trimalchio himself, reclining on three long couches and each with his own small table. Music played throughout the feast. First came dainties to whet the appetite before the host himself appeared, such as dormice served in poppies and honey, and hot sausages served on silver gridirons with Syrian plums and slices of pomegranate underneath. Presently Trimalchio was carried in, with his neck and head swathed in scarlet and purple wrappings, rings on his left hand, a golden armlet and ivory circlet on his bare right arm, and plying a silver toothpick. "It's very inconvenient to me, my friends," he remarks, "to come to dinner just now. But not to keep you waiting I must sacrifice myself. Only you must let me finish my game." And in came a boy with the most delicate dice and dice-board imaginable.

More relishes follow, and Trimalchio soon gives up his game and devotes his whole attention to the feast. A slave boy lets a silver dish drop. He is ordered a flogging at once, and the master bids them let the dish lie, "to be cleared away with the other rubbish." Huge flagons of wine are brought

in, labelled conspicuously, "Opimian, aged 100 years." "Come," cries Trimalchio, clapping his hands, "souse yourselves, gentlemen. 'Tis genuine Opimian, better than we had yesterday. And they were properer men to dinner then, too!" In came a slave with a toy skeleton in silver with flexible joints. Trimalchio played with it a little, and then broke out into atrocious doggerel:—

"Ah woe is me, and miserable man mere froth!
Such shall we all become when Death doth hale us off!
So let us be jolly
And hang melancholy
While we may, while we may, while we may."

Dishes of all sorts, bizarre and tempting alike, rained in upon the guests. The carver performed all his work keeping time to music. Trimalchio kept murmuring "Carver" to himself, "so I judged there must be a joke somewhere and asked my neighbour." "You see," he explained, "the fellow's name is Carver, and our host thus kills two birds with one stone as often as he calls to him."

"Presently I could not eat another morsel, so fell to talk again." Fortunata, Trimalchio's wife, was bustling about, and my neighbour chatted concerning her. "His guardian-angel, sir, a fashionable foul-mouthed magpie, but very careful of him! He dotes on her: would believe black was white if she chose to call it so. He's vastly wealthy; won't buy anything ready made; gets bees from Attica and manufactures honey of Hymettus on the spot. It was only to-day he wrote to India for mushroom seed. His fellow freedmen are juicy, too. See that fellow at the bottom o' the table there? It seems only yesterday he was carrying fuel on his back. Now he's worth hard upon a million. How did he manage it? Well they do say, but mind you I don't know for certain, that 'twas a goblin hoard, real fairy treasure trove. A purse-proud slave he is too. Not that *I* envy anyone, mark you, if God gives him wealth. That other chap down there i' the lowest seat hasn't feathered his nest so well. Just touched a million, hesitated, then—crash! Really not his own fault though, and there's no better fellow living. His scoundrels of servants robbed him. No good trusting to pot-luck with a friend either! It's a lonely road going down hill. A good honest trade his was, too. Eh? Oh! yes, an undertaker. Feasted his friends like a king. Those dinners —what a dream they were!"

A pack of hounds rushes into the room, and in comes a boar with a cap of freedom on. At the first slash of the knife out fly a crowd of doves, and the bird catchers come in and capture them. "See what fine acorns the fellow lived on," cried Trimalchio. "But why the cap of liberty?" I ask. "Not know that!" says my neighbour. "Why the dish came up yesterday and nobody touched it. So he's earned his freedom." "I cursed my own stupidity and asked no more questions lest I should seem unused to polite society."

Presently Trimalchio withdraws for a little and talk becomes general. Dama begins on the weather. "How short the days are now! One must go straight from bed to dinner. And how cold it is too! I can hardly get warm in my bath. A hot drink isn't a bad overcoat though. I've taken such stiff ones that I'm a bit rocky by now. Heavy stuff this wine is."

"As for me," chimes in Seleucus, "I don't go every day to the baths. Too much washing takes all the spirit out of a man. It's when I see the bottom of a loving cup, *then* I snap my fingers at the cold. And to-day I could not go in any case. I had to go to a funeral. Poor dear Chrysanthus. He was a fine looking man. I can hardly believe he's gone. We are only blown-out skins, flies upon the wall, mere soap-bubbles. Why *did* he try the starvation cure? Five days without a morsel of bread! And he's joined the great Majority all the same. The doctors were too many for him. I suppose it was fate though. Your doctor can't do much except try and cheer you up. It was a fine funeral. Couch, pall o' the best, mourners a' plenty, even though his wife did shed crocodile tears. Well, well, what of that? They are all cats, the women. It's a grand mistake to do anyone a kindness. Just as well kick him downstairs. But an old love sticks like a limpet."

His maundering was becoming a bore, and Phileros struck in. "Come, leave the dead alone! Chrysanthus didn't have half a bad time. Started with a penny in his pocket, would pick a farthing out of a sewer, and grew rich as fast as a honeycomb grows. He must have left a cool few thousands, and all in cash too. But to tell the truth, and I was not born yesterday either, he *had* a tongue, had Chrysanthus. He was just a walking pepper-pot. Now his brother was a good generous fellow, if you like, and no fool in money matters either. And Chrysanthus has quarrelled with him and gone

and left his money to some gutter-snipe. Once throw your own kin overboard and there's no saying where you will get to. He was a superstitious old fellow too. He believed anything his prophesying slaves told him, and suffered in consequence. Yet he was a merchant, and a regular Fortune's darling. Everything he handled turned to gold. But it's easy going when you live in a round world with never a corner to it. How old do you think he was? Seventy, if a day, and yet black as a crow to the finish. He *was* a bit of a prehistoric peep perhaps, but he had a rare eye for beauty still. Quite a lady's man he was, and with a pretty catholic taste. And it is about the only thing that he has got to his credit over yonder."

"What has all this to do with us?" growls Ganymede. "Now the price o' corn, *that* hits us. Yet what do any of you care? It's the very deuce. A year's starvation already, and see how the drought lasts. And those cursed aediles are in league with the bakers. 'One good turn deserves another,' say they, and so the poor suffer. But your Lords, *they* munch *their* Christmas cheer all the same, bless you. Ah, if only we had those old aediles who were here when first I came from Asia. *They* went about like lions. Corn was dirt cheap in old Safinius' day, when I was a boy. A penny loaf was a meal for two then. Now it's smaller than a bull's-eye. Things are going from bad to worse, and the town is growing backwards like a cow's tail. The folk are so afraid of their own aediles. They are lions at home and as timid as hares in the open. My clothes are gone, and my cottage will go next, unless either God or man takes pity on us. Fact is, it is all the God's doing, I believe. No one believes in heaven or hell, keeps fasts, or cares a fig for Jupiter. They are much too busy counting their money bags. Now in old days it was different. Our noble dames would climb the hill barefoot, hair waving loose, thoughts pure, and pray Jove for water, and down came the rain in bucket-fulls. Or if it did not come then, it never came at all. And back they all came, dripping like drowned rats. There's no help from Heaven for us sceptics. The Gods are too gouty. So our fields lie and bake."

"Heigh ho!" cried Echion the fireman, "Cheer up! Lost to-day is found to-morrow, as the rustic said when his pig bolted. It would not be a bad country if only the men were up to the mark. But others are as bad. If you were abroad

you'd say the pigs were running about ready-roasted here. Think of the show we are going to have. Our friend Titus is a regular hot-head and has got together a rare collection, a female charioteer among 'em, and Glyco has handed over to him his family cashier for the Beast-fight. His mistress was too fond of him. Glyco only gives himself away, for when a slave only obeys orders, is it the slave's fault, I ask you. It is the woman ought to be given to the bull to toss. But if you daren't kick the donkey, you must kick the post. And how could Glyco expect Hermogenes' sprig to be anything but a chip of the old block? Now he *could* put salt on a sparrow's tail. You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. And for Glyco to show up his women-folk like this!

"I have an inkling now that Mammaea will give me and mine a dinner at two shillings a head presently. If so, Norbanus won't be in it at the elections. It isn't as if Norbanus had done anything for us. Just look at the pack of rubbish he gave us for gladiators! 'I gave you a show,' says he. Very well, I clapped. You reckon up and you'll find you are in my debt now. 'What a chatterbox!' says Agamemnon. Yes, I heard you. You know how to talk and won't, and sneer at us poor fellows who try to. We know you are crazed on learning. One o' these days, perhaps, you'll pay me a visit at my cottage? There'll be a morsel of food there, a chicken, an egg or two, even though the weather this year *has* played hay with the crops, and plenty to drink at any rate. My little boy there 'll suit you down to the ground for a pupil. He's in long division already, and always poring over his books. Clever too, and well-made. He's dead-nuts on birds too, just at present, and I've killed three of his finches already and said the weasel ate 'em. Loves painting too. He has kicked off at Greek already and is well on in Latin. But his master's not strict enough with him. There is another little chap of mine, an inquisitive little fellow. I've bought some law books for him. It's useful to have someone in the house with a knowledge of law, and it will keep him in bread and butter too. He has fooled round quite enough with letters. If he shies at law, he shall learn a trade, a barber's, auctioneer's, or an attorney's at any rate. He can't lose that anyway, this side of the grave. 'Primigenius,' say I to him, well nigh every day, 'Idle Jack goes a' begging. Look at Philero now. He's as big

a man as Norbanus, and once he was an errand boy. It is all because he stuck to his books when he was a lad. Learning is so much money in your pocket. If you learn a trade you can always make a living.'"

Back comes Trimalchio and apologises for his long absence. "We are all of us hollow," he remarks ruefully, "so pray don't stand on ceremony." Dinner is but half finished, and the host now tries to give the conversation a literary turn. "Pray, Agamemnon," says he, "what did you lecture on to-day? You must not think I despise letters. I am a bit of a scholar myself. There are two libraries in the house, a Greek one and a Latin one. Just give us a little discourse now, on the Twelve Sorrows of Hercules, for instance, or the tale of Ulixes and how the Cyclops twisted his thumb with the pincers. I used to read these in Homer when I was a boy. I once saw the Sibyl with my own eyes swinging in a pot, and when the boys said to her 'Sibyl, what do you want?' all she said was 'I want to die.'"[1]

The talk drifted on to Art. "Corinthian bronze now!" cries Trimalchio. "Do you know who first invented it? It was that slippery fellow Hannibal after the sack of Troy. He put all the bronze, silver, and gold together, melted 'em all down, and made Corinthian ware o' the mixture. I like glass better myself. It doesn't smell. It is a pity it is so brittle. Else it is better than gold. There was a fellow once invented an unbreakable glass, and off he went to Caesar, hurled a vase of it to the ground, picked it up with only a dent in it, and hammered it into shape again. 'Very pretty,' says the Emperor; 'Is anyone else in the secret? No?' And he had his head chopped off. Gold would have been as cheap as dirt else. Look at the subjects on my silver jugs and bowls too! Daedalus shutting Niobe into the Trojan Horse; Cassandra killing her children—the dead boys lie most lifelike! Ah, you don't find a connoisseur like me selling his knowledge in a hurry!"

By this time Trimalchio is getting well on in his cups. First he wants his wife to dance. Then he tries himself. In comes his secretary and reads an account of the events on his estates, a caricature of the City Paper. Then follow acrobats. "If there are two things I love in this world," sighs Trimalchio, "they are acrobats and pipers." Presently

[1] For sheer idiotcy this is surely unsurpassed.

a slave boy stumbles and bruises his master's arm. But Trimalchio was merciful. He ordered another slave a flogging for bandaging it with white instead of scarlet wool, but solemnly gave the boy his freedom. "It would never do to have it said that Trimalchio was hurt by a mere slave."

Philosophising and poetry fill up the time till the presents for the guests are brought in, each with a punning description on its ticket. Ascyltos meanwhile is laughing till he cries, to the great wrath of an old fellow beside Encolpius, who rates him furiously. This sets Giton into a roar, and the angry guest turns on him at once. "You, too, you feather-pate, you curly-haired onion! Where did *you* buy your freedom, gallows-bird? Why don't your master keep you in order? A plague on both of you—like master, like man. I'll meet you again, you rat, you turnip-top, you and your precious master, and not Olympian Jove himself shall help you then with your dangling hair and your twopence ha'penny owner. I mayn't have learnt geometry, philology, and other nonsense of the kind. I'm a plain man, but I can read and cipher enough for all I want, and by the Powers I warrant you'll find my ring worth more in the market-place any day than that sham one o' yours that you robbed your mistress of. Bah! a pretty sight is a bedraggled fox! And your Master, too! Master! More like a Chimpanzee! Now, *my* master taught me to set my house in order and not to speak evil of dignities. I thank the Gods *I* was not brought up so!"

This was getting alarming, but Trimalchio stayed the quarrel. "Come, Hermerus, be merciful!" he called out. "You were young too once, remember, and cried cock-a-doodle-do with the best of them." Then they fall to telling stories. A horrible tale of the Were-wolf on a moonlight night on the Capuan road is capped by Trimalchio with one of witches howling outside the house and a dead boy within, so that they all shiver with fright, and implore the Night-Hags to stop at home when they go back from dinner. A dog fight follows, and the fun grows fast and furious. Two new guests come in from a funeral-wake, Habinnas, who was already drunk, and his wife Scintilla. Fortunata at this joins the revel too, and presently Trimalchio calls his slaves in, to the diners' great discomfort. The cook flings himself down beside Encolpius, "reeking with sauces," and begins to bet Trimalchio that the Greens win the next chariot race.

Trimalchio gets lachrymose and slobbers tearfully. He has his will brought in and recited, amid the loud sobs of his household. He gives Habinnas the most elaborate instructions for his tomb. "There must be ships on it, and myself on the tribunal with five gold rings on, pouring gold from a sack. And a banquet scene, and Fortunata's statue on my right hand holding a dove and leading a puppy, and my darling slave boy, and big jars of wine, and a broken urn with a boy weeping over it, and a sun-dial in the middle that anyone looking at the time must read my name as well, and the inscription, a really fine one." We all burst into tears. It might have been a funeral. But Trimalchio cheers up suddenly and leads the whole rout out to the bath.

Encolpius and Ascyltos now hope to escape. But the watch dog barks so savagely that Ascyltos in his terror falls into the fishpond, and Encolpius in helping him out falls in too. They have to go to the bath to dry their things, and so are carried back with the rest to the feast which begins again. "We'll keep it up till daylight," cries Trimalchio.

But Fortunata becomes indignant at her husband's attentions to a favourite and reviles him shrilly. Trimalchio hurls a cup in her face. Then there is a terrible uproar. Fortunata weeps as if her eye were out, while Trimalchio fumes hotly against her. "Didn't I pick her out of the gutter? I'm not going to stand it. Habinnas, I won't have her statue on my tomb. I don't want quarrels when I'm dead. And she's not to kiss me when I die." Then he recounts the whole story of his life, with various thrusts at his unhappy wife. To end it all he calls on his slave Stichus to bring in his funeral bier to show them how soft and delicate the wrappings are. "You be careful, Stichus," says he, "not to let the mice or moths get at these, or I will burn you alive. I do mean to have a fine funeral." He stretches himself out full length upon it, and bids the horn-players come in and make lament as if he were really dead. This they do so lustily that the entire neighbourhood is roused, and thinking Trimalchio's house is on fire they come rushing up with water and axes and beat down the doors. In the confusion Encolpius Ascyltos and Giton at last manage to escape.

The remainder of the work passes from one amusing farce to another. A fracas in Puteoli in the inn drives Encolpius and Giton to take ship and flee, accompanied by the poet Eumolpus, a prosy old fellow, who now becomes one of the

leading dramatis personæ. Still more humourous scenes ensue on shipboard, till a violent storm wrecks the vessel and throws the adventurers ashore at Croton. Here the poet declaims at length a poem on the Civil War "after Lucan" and the three set to work to impose upon that city's legacy hunters with great success until in the midst of their scheming the narrative breaks off. Boccaccio is the only narrator to whom Petronius in this portion of the Romance can be compared. And we might part from our ragamuffin vagabonds, the wily Encolpius, the coaxing pretty Giton, the charlatan Eumolpus, with regret (for their merry and farcical adventures betray a spirit and a humour only too rare in Latin literature), did not some other considerations intervene.

Petronius' romance illustrates as well as all Seneca's moral treatises the life and corruption of the age of Nero, and confirms the philosopher's diatribes in well nigh every particular. The author, as has been said, is a perfect sceptic. The one God of whom he speaks with any show of respect is Priapus. His characters are depicted as intensely superstitious as well as sceptical themselves. Epicureanism, the doctrine which preaches the enjoyment of this present life since no one can be sure of the morrow, is stamped on every page, and practised by the characters of the novelist's imagination with the grossness of vulgarity and the libertine enjoyment of the most depraved. There is no trace of a belief in any woman's virtue or in any man's. Petronius is one with Nero himself in this belief. And that he draws his portraits from the life and is no such recluse as was Persius is proved by the finished realism of all his sketches. He paints life as he found it and is merrily contented with, if also amusedly contemptuous of, that life. And the one object of man's ambition is wealth. The pursuit of riches by all means, even the foulest, is praised and practised by all Petronius' characters. If Stoicism gave but an uncertain voice on this question, Petronius and his companions have no doubts.

> "Quod vis, nummis praesentibus opta,
> Et veniet. Clausum possidet arca Jovem."

This opinion is repeated in the romance in a hundred different shapes. It alone is the universal creed. Religion, honour, morality, virtue, were dream-names, names of mirth and mockery. Philosophy, Stoicism, could do nothing against so strong a stream of tendency.

They may talk as they please about what they call pelf,
And how one ought never to think of one's self,
And how pleasures of thought surpass eating and drinking—
My pleasure of thought is the pleasure of thinking
How pleasant it is to have money, heigh ho!
How pleasant it is to have money.

The powerlessness of Stoicism to influence any but a few has been to some extent explained. It gave no answer to the dissatisfaction of the Age. There was also a satisfaction of the age with a corrupt morality with which it failed to do serviceable battle. Immorality seemed victorious in all classes of society. Of Eastern superstitions there were plenty. The Jews in Rome might go blameless of such reproaches, but their way of salvation was truly too confined and impossible to lead men in general out of darkness into light. Cybele's "one-eyed priestess," the priest of Isis and her Egyptian retinue of Deities, the Chaldean seer and diviner, these and others like them carried away in their train crowds who sought vainly to appease the disquiet of unbelief or craved the satisfaction of religious or superstitious excitement. Still more men worshipped only at the shrines of Wealth and Passion, and undisguisedly enjoyed their deities' confessed supremacy. The evidence for the sober truth of such a picture has been cited. Man's intellectual, emotional, moral, and religious needs, were not satisfied and could not be satisfied. Two new claimants on his acceptance appeared in the first century and professed to give that satisfaction for which hitherto he had sought in vain and to spur him to discover his needs. The religion of Mithras scarcely concerns the historian of Nero's reign. It won its triumphs later. The religion of Christ challenged the Government earlier.

CHAPTER X

Christianity and Judaism

§ 1. Christianity and the Government. The Causes of Conflict.
§ 2. The Conflict and its Issue.
§ 3. Rome and Judaism.
§ 4. The Growth of Disaffection.
§ 5. The Jewish Insurrection.

" Nay, should His coming be delayed awhile,
Say, ten years longer (twelve years, some compute)
See if, for every finger of thy hands,
There be not found, that day the world shall end,
Hundreds of souls, each holding by Christ's word
That He will grow incorporate with all.'

(Robert Browning, *A Death in the Desert.*)

NERO

FROM A BUST IN THE LOUVRE, PARIS

Of doubtful antiquity

CHAPTER X

§ 1. The Causes of Conflict

THERE exists no evidence to inform us with any certainty when or how Christianity first came to Rome and was preached in Rome. The history of early Christianity in Rome does not differ in this respect from that of its beginning in most other cities and countries, including our own. No historian could expect or claim that bright sunlight should "dispel the dark cloud that hangs over the first age of the Church."[1]

Legend and comparatively late tradition, curious as story, comparatively valueless as evidence, attempted to write upon the first page in the historical record, which history, for very intelligible causes, had left blank. The Emperor Tiberius, says Tertullian, repeating perhaps a second century legend, hearing of Christ had proposed to the Senate to add Him to the number of Roman Gods, but the Senate had refused. The Emperor Nero, relates another tradition, had executed Pontius Pilate for his slaying of Christ. Saint Peter, who vanishes from the Scripture records between the years A.D. 42 and 51, going, says St Luke simply, "to another place,"[2] is held to have proceeded from Jerusalem to Rome, there to have preached the Gospel and founded the Roman Church some fifteen years before his greater colleague St Paul addressed his epistle to that Church. None of these traditions can be accepted as even probabilities.

That the Christian Church, however, was planted in Rome early and grew rapidly is certain. Into the causes of that growth we do not for the moment inquire. Already under Claudius, disturbances, probably provoked by Jewish anger at the new sect, led to Government interference and the expulsion of the Jews from Rome. With the Jews, of course, went all the Christian converts belonging to that nation, such as were Aquila and Priscilla, who betook themselves to Corinth. Such converts as there might be who were not

[1] Gibbon. [2] Acts xii. 17.

Jews by birth remained in Rome, whither, too, the Jews were speedily allowed to return, and with them the Christians who had shared their exile. But judging from the names of the Christians in Rome which are preserved to us, the early Church there was certainly largely Gentile as well as Jewish. And the greetings in St Paul's letter to the Romans, written in A.D. 58 or 59, as well as, perhaps, the silent testimony of Rome's burial grounds, prove that Christianity had already under Claudius taken firm root in the city. Its growth, naturally unnoticed both by the non-Christian writers, who regarded the sect as beneath contempt, and by the Christian historian, as it was unconnected with the work of any of the Apostles, was yet so rapid that the great persecution of A.D. 64 claimed very many victims in the city. These were certainly drawn almost entirely from the lower classes, the slaves, the poor, the lesser men and women, many of them neither of Roman blood nor of Roman citizenship. Yet their intelligence was certainly higher than their birth. In A.D. 57, however, at the outset of Nero's Principate, a Roman lady of high rank, one Pomponia Graecina, the wife of the general of Claudius' army which first invaded Britain, was put upon her trial before a family tribunal for "foreign superstition," and, though she was acquitted, for the remaining twenty-six years of her life she never put off her mourning garb or her sadness. Christianity has claimed her as a proselyte of the new religion, and thus cited her as proof that the faith early won converts not only in Caesar's or Narcissus' household (which implies no high birth in the converted) but also in the first circles of Roman Society. Other explanations of her supposed offence are given both by the Roman historian who alone narrates it, and by those modern writers who regard her as a convert either to Judaism or to some unspecified oriental superstition. And the fact that she was acquitted of the charge is sometimes too easily forgotten. She must be assumed to have been none the less guilty, despite the acquittal, before she can be ranked as "the first female Saint of the Great World, the elder sister of Melania, Eustochia, and Paula."[1] But archaeology has added its claim that Pomponia is the Christian "Lucina" of Callistus' Catacombs, and perhaps the combined evidence may be admitted. If Pomponia be taken as a Christian, her acquittal shows that Christianity was still but hardly distinguished from Judaism,

[1] Renan.

which was not a prohibited religion in Rome. And her long continued sadness and gloom of demeanour add, in this event, some weight to the reproaches of the great English sceptic for the "gloomy and austere" aspect of the early Christians.[1] Perhaps too high a price is paid if we rank Plautius' wife among the early Christian Saints. For the sneer that "It was not in *this* world that the primitive Christians were desirous of making themselves either agreeable or useful"[2] might befit a Pomponia better than a St Paul.[3]

Christianity could at least claim few if any adherents in any but the lower circles of Rome during its first few decades of growth in the city. Nor is this surprising. The upper circles had better accredited teachers to answer their desires and appease their dissatisfaction than a Jewish fanatic could be who won his adherents among the rabble of the populace. It must need time before they could discover that the new religion might yield them a satisfaction, a dogma, principles of life, and what might prove the only possible sanction for morality and ethics, gifts which, as has been maintained, those more accredited preachers or doctrines failed to bestow upon them. Man would impose his haste upon the higher Powers if it were possible, but to do this he must impose his mortality upon them as well.

Meanwhile the arrival of the zealous prisoner St Paul, probably in the year A.D. 61, and his two years' quiet and unhindered preaching to all who came to visit him, must have greatly spread the tidings of the new doctrine through the city, and not only through "the whole palace," in whose precincts he had his hired lodging.[4] Whether St Luke, as he wrote his concluding lines, knew that that easy imprisonment of two years had been followed by condemnation and death, and was unwilling to narrate it, for that he always would present the Roman magistrate as friendly to the new religion (if with a friendship only of tolerant contempt), or whether his last words were written as the two years drew to their ending, and the writer therefore could not know what should follow at the close, whether acquittal or condemnation, remains uncertain. The vigorous tradition of St Paul's acquittal and further journeys, perhaps in Spain, more probably in Asia Minor again, before he returned to Rome to die, perhaps as one of the martyrs of A.D. 64, we hold to be

[1] Gibbon, ii. p. 78
[2] Gibbon, ii. p. 35.
[3] See note at end.
[4] See note at end.

probable. But all the traditions when scrutinised and tested yield no certain evidence at all. We may perhaps believe that St Paul's undoubted expectations of acquittal and release had such good grounds that they must by A.D. 63 have been justified. Indeed this we regard on the whole as probable, inasmuch as no cause had as yet arisen for the execution of a citizen because of his Christianity before the great fire of Rome (albeit such execution for following an unlicensed religion was always possible). If so, we are forced to the conclusion that the author of the Acts finished his work before St Paul's acquittal. Otherwise he must have mentioned this, so well does it harmonise with his undoubted attitude of friendliness to the Romans. Thus we obtain in passing the year A.D. 63 for the conclusion of the composition of the Acts of the Apostles. That St Paul, upon this view of his acquittal in A.D. 63, which we hold not as proved but as most likely, fulfilled his intention of a journey to Spain is a most doubtful assertion. It is more likely that he revisited Asia Minor, and coming back soon to Rome perished in the persecution of A.D. 64. But with his first stay in Rome, he vanishes from the pages of certain history. Yet, as the German historian truly says, he vanishes as one "immortal in very truth if ever man may attain an earthly immortality.[1] He had not sown the first seed in Rome, but he had greatly fostered its growing.[2]

And hence the Roman government took cognisance of the fact that there was permeating the lower classes of the city a new religion, which it had long confused with Judaism, which therefore had long shared in the scornful tolerance which was extended to the older creed, but that this was after all *not* Judaism, but some distinct religion. For long the Roman officials had been the succour of the Christian persecuted by the Jews or by the mob, and had interfered to save him from their clutches, regarding the religious questions involved as mere minutiae of fanaticism, and important only in so far as the consequent turbulence threatened the peace and order of their cities and provinces. They had viewed the religion of Jew and therefore of Christian with supreme contempt, regarding (to apply the historian's words in a new connection), the "sublime notion entertained by them of the Deity whom they neither confined within the walls of a Temple nor represented by any

[1] Ranke, p. 192. [2] See note at end.

human figure" as arising "not so much from a superiority of reason as from a want of ingenuity,"[1] and meriting therefore only amusement and ridicule, or abhorrence and suppression only in so far as religious absurdity might clothe itself in a political garb. "The innocence of the first Christians was protected by ignorance and contempt; and the tribunal of the Pagan magistrate often proved their most assured refuge against the fury of the synagogue."[2] That this was the case at first in the Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire is fully proved by unassailable evidence. In Rome a similar ignorance and contempt had both confounded the Christians with the Jews and served the former's fortunes well. But when part at least of the ignorance passed away; when Christianity was discovered by the Government to be a new religion; then, given a pretext, there should be no mercy shown to the votaries of the new creed.

And this for very intelligible reasons. The Government cared not one whit for any tenets of belief, whether these were likely to be harmful or not, at the earliest period of the discovery of the new religion. To their knowledge, they were face to face with a large, rumour said a very large, body of men, recruited mainly from the lowest scum of the populace, which displayed undoubtedly the most dangerous and suspicious tendencies. If any one Augustan Law was to be held as the pillar of Society's peace and order and of the Emperor's security, it was Augustus' Law of Associations, prohibiting all such rigidly unless they obtained State sanction. New religions too were always suspected of political designs, and in themselves won tolerance from the State only after long enquiry. If the religion were proved to be politically harmless, then no State was so tolerant as the Roman State, "Civitas omnium numinum cultrix."[3] The State claimed only one, and, it might seem, a most reasonable return for its tolerance, namely that the votary of the new religion should extend an equal tolerance to all those who did not share his views, and should add the conception of Rome's Imperial Divinity to his Pantheon at least nominally. The test of Caesar-worship, offered always as a sign, and the only sign possible, of a man's political loyalty, and *not* as a test of religious belief, was an easy one on these terms to any polytheist. Essentially it was "an institution not of re-

[1] Gibbon, I. ix. p. 229, of the Germans.
[2] *Ib.* II. xvi. p. 83.
[3] Arnobius, Adv. Gent. vi. 7.

ligion but of policy."[1] Druidism, which refused the tolerance and cherished besides aspirations of revolt, was ruthlessly crushed. In early days the worship of Bacchus had taken upon itself the garb of secrecy and its revellers met in midnight gatherings, and the Roman Republican Government, suspecting it of covering dark political designs, had stamped it out with an almost Turkish severity and cruelty. The Roman Imperial Government was not changed in temper from the Republican as regards secrecy of religious association. Given the secrecy, and at once some sinister political conspiracy was, and not unnaturally, suspected. True, Judaism, whose adherents were no polytheists, might refuse to worship Caesar if the test were imposed. But the Government of Nero knew all about Judaism, and did not impose the test. The Jews offered sacrifice for the Emperor in their own Temple at Jerusalem, and this was a very fair equivalent. Moreover in Rome the Jews, though numerous, were a peaceful law-abiding, if a dirty and disagreeable, folk, and their religion presented such very marked characteristics that not only could it never hide itself or its designs, but it was not very likely to spread at such a rate beyond the bounds of its own race as to endanger the polytheistic Roman religion or the Imperial creed. These therefore could afford to regard Judaism with amused indifference, dislike, or interest, as they pleased. It was a "fortress of nationality,"[2] very dangerous in its own land, but harmless when erected in Rome, and not many outsiders wished to garrison it.

But Christianity presented a very different aspect. It was a new religion, and all that the Government knew about it was that the Jews, among whom it had originated, rejected and hated it and that its founder was a criminal executed by a small Roman official in a petty and turbulent province. It spread rapidly without authorisation. It never asked for authorisation. Its votaries met secretly and at night. Rumour said that they were guilty of the most disgusting and sickening practices. There were no limits of nationality at all to its increase. Its very universality might seem inconsistent with patriotism (as it does to some to-day). It might conceal political design. The Christians held aloof from common life and religious observances, and scowled upon harmless and pious customs. Every Roman's sense of law, of order, of decency, should abominate the cult. Its votaries

[1] Gibbon, I. iii. p. 69. [2] Renan, Les Apôtres, p. 350.

were notoriously aggressive and "inflexibly obstinate,"[1] and belonged mainly to the lowest dregs of the people. If any reasonable pretext should be given, the Government was compelled to abandon the old toleration, which was due in the main to its ignorance, and this ignorance was now enlightened. The Government was bound rigorously to suppress the "new and malignant superstition." The desire of the Roman Government to suppress Christianity, and the declaration of war upon the new religion by the State, are entirely intelligible, and, from the Government point of view, entirely satisfactory. And we do not do well to shut our eyes to this fact. "A new creed, like a new country, is an unhomely place of sojourn; but it makes men lean on one another and join hands."[2] It was precisely this secret joining of hands which the Roman Government, not unlike modern Governments in this, chiefly abhorred. And the Christians' "Atheism" and "Immorality" were but an additional inducement to those who believed firmly in these to act sternly. The Christian writers of the age of Nero illustrate very clearly both the perpetual insecurity of the Christian, and his evil repute with the common folk. They could urge the converted in the most strenuous terms to give the lie to the latter by their life and conversation. They could not avert the Roman suspicion, or remedy their own insecurity. As Christians they must suffer, and they were prepared to suffer so that it might be as Christians, and not as malefactors.[3]

§ 2. The Conflict and its Issue

As has been already narrated, it was the chance burning of half Rome in July A.D. 64 and the Emperor's need of scapegoats (whom however he may himself have held, as Rome held them, to be really guilty) which led to the first terrible persecution of the Christians by the State.[4] The victims, accused first of incendiarism, were subsequently condemned to death by the supreme magistrate, in virtue of his executive authority, mainly on the ground of their Christianity, and not of necessity on any more specific charge. The hatred towards the human race, of which the Christians were accused, was a real cause of their condemnation because men believed

[1] Gibbon, II. xvi. p. 78, from Pliny.
[2] R. L. Stevenson, "John Knox."
[3] See note at end, and Appendix B.
[4] See above Chap. VII. § 5.

them guilty of it. It may be regarded as the ground of that condemnation in so far as the vague phrase covered the general danger to Society which the Christians were held to have become, and the danger called now for administrative action. This hatred, it was held, issued in crimes calling for immediate suppression. In itself it was no definite charge at law, such as magic, treason, conspiracy, sacrilege. All such specific charges might be held, and probably were held, to be subsumed under the general accusation of their Christianity. Those Christians who did not suffer as confessed incendiaries (and these last were a small minority) were condemned as Christians. The existence of the Christians as such was inconsistent with the public welfare and the public safety. Christianity was now, as under Trajan later, a sufficient crime in itself, when the magistrate in Rome or in the provinces chose to act, to discover or accept accusations against its followers, and, if he liked, to condemn.

In later years the test of "Caesar Worship," the offering of sacrifice to the divinity of the Emperor, was usually imposed to discover if the accused were Christians, or would so far recant their Christianity. If they accepted the test of political loyalty, it mattered little what curious religious beliefs they might hold besides. But they must prove themselves good and loyal citizens or subjects of the Empire, and avoid breaking the law besides by secret and unlicensed association. In the first persecution under Nero, the test was applied, it seems, in the reflex of the persecution which prevailed in the province of Asia, wherein Antipas perished and other Christians probably as well. And the test was scorned and hated by the converts as the very worship of Antichrist. In the eyes of the Government it may have been but a merciful and an "indirect repression of Christianity."[1] In the eyes of the Christians it was a blow struck once and for all at the very roots of their faith, at the cardinal doctrine of their creed. It was every whit as fatal as a formal prohibition of their religion by law or edict would have been. But such edict or formal prohihition was entirely unnecessary and was not published either by Nero or by his successors for long years to come. The executive powers of the magistrate were quite sufficient in themselves. Even the Roman citizen who admitted his Christianity thereby became as it were an enemy of the State, and could be forthwith condemned, though only by

[1] Mommsen, pp. 394-5.

the supreme magisterial authority, if he chose to appeal for hearing of his case to this.

There is no evidence that the test of Caesar-worship was imposed on the accused in Rome itself under Nero. Their admission of their Christianity presumably dispensed with the necessity of its discovery by such a method, and it was not a time when the presiding magistrate sought, as he did so often later, to persuade a Christian to recant and save his life by what seemed to official eyes so very easy a means. Confession under Nero in Rome implied immediate execution after July A.D. 64.

Similarly in later times Christianity, which in itself remained from the first a prohibited religion and severely punishable as such, could creep under the protection afforded to it in a slight measure by the very Law of Associations already mentioned. For the Christian assemblies for public worship might avail themselves of the general State recognition of "Collegia Tenuiorum," *i.e.* the Roman equivalents for Burial Clubs or Friendly Societies, of which there were a very great number in Rome and Italy. But at the best of times this was a protection at law afforded the Church in very scant measure indeed. The Roman Law strictly forbade the meeting of the members of such societies more than once a month, nor might any man belong to more than one. Worship to the Christian could not be straitened by such rules. There were also well-nigh countless religious associations in Rome which applied for and obtained the necessary authorisation from the Senate. But the Christian Church was too large and too suspected a body to have hopes of obtaining such permission. There is, however, again no evidence that the Christians as early as Nero's Principate either sought to obtain this scanty measure of protection, or were condemned as members of illicit secret societies. The secrecy of their associations doubtless, as has been suggested, lent colour to the suspicions against them of crimes unmentionable, and was part of their growing unpopularity with the Government. But under Nero as under Trajan the Christians suffered as Christians, not merely as members of secret societies. Indeed, the law was far more merciful to any but the founders of such societies than the magistrate was to the Christian prisoner.

The circumstances of horror which attended the punishment of the Christians in A.D. 64 have been already narrated.

If they turned the anger of the people into pity, despite the firm popular conviction in their horrid guilt, they did not lessen the crime of Christianity, and were, as causing pity, regarded by the Roman as so much the more to be regretted. In that persecution probably perished the two leading Apostles of Christianity, Saint Peter and Saint Paul. Round their deaths tradition and legend have woven so thick a web of loving fancy that the historian cannot disentangle truth from fiction, probability from improbability. Neither need this be regretted, for such a task, were it possible, would be but an ungrateful one.

Both apostles, says legend, fared forth together on the way to death. By the Servilian gardens on the road to Ostia they were parted by their guards, and bade each other farewell. Saint Paul travelled a short way farther along the Ostian road, and was slain by the executioner's sword on the site where now his great Basilica is built, suffering, as Roman citizen, the "more honourable death." Saint Peter was led across the river to Nero's circus on the Vatican field, and crucified as a common felon. But in his humility, as unworthy of the punishment which his Lord whom he had denied endured, he craved and won from the soldiers the fate of crucifixion with his head downwards. The Church of S. Pietro crowns the site of his martyrdom, as, in Catholic belief, it enshrines not his memory alone, but also his holy relics. Tradition—and in this respect it is absolutely worthy of all credence—never varies in choosing Rome as the city where he ended his life by his triumphant death. Thither he had come but a few months perhaps before his end. Thence he had written his great catholic epistle, bearing undismayed witness to the peril which threatened all the Christians. Thence, added a later tradition (yet one, if less trustworthy for that reason, still as touching as are any legends of the Saints), thence he might have escaped at the last hour from his dungeon. Loving hands secretly released him on the night before his death, and he, an old man and a solitary, went out to flee along the Appian way. "But in the Gate he bethought Christ met him, and made as He would pass into the city. 'Lord, whither goest thou?' he asked. And Christ answered him saying, 'I come to be crucified yet a second time.' . . . Wherefore Peter perceived that Christ must be crucified a second time in his little servant. And he turned and went back and made answer to the Christians as they questioned

him, and forthwith men laid hands upon him, and by his cross he glorified the Lord Jesus."[1]

The actual persecution of the martyrs probably ceased in Rome within a few months of its beginning, though its echoes still were heard in Asia and in part inspired the fiery denunciations of the Apocalypse shortly after Nero's death. But the Christians were not exposed to active persecution again until the Principate of Domitian, though their position of peril and insecurity was not changed in the intervening years. But though the persecution was very temporary, its effects were great and lasting. The very names of the martyrs are unknown, save for the two Apostles', and that to a Church so rich and abundant in tradition! Their martyrdom, whose honour they in their simplicity failed to refuse for "reasons singular and abstruse," is their only honour. Theirs can hardly have been its "pomp, dignity, and self-satisfaction." Yet, as the French historian says, "the magnificent poem of which they wrote the first page will be one of Christianity's titles to the conquest of the world."[2] But the immediate significance of the Neronian persecution is not only that war was declared between Christianity and the State (there had never been any treaty of peace between the two as soon as the latter discovered the existence of the former), but also the slaughter of the first fierce battle proved that henceforth both in law and in fact the two must be avowed enemies.

In law, no change was needed for many years to come. The only new questions which arose were as regards the expediency of setting in motion from time to time the magisterial severity, the treatment of evidence against the accused, the methods of the discovery of their guilt, and the nature of their punishments.

In fact, Christianity and the State were inevitably hostile, just because neither could understand the position of the other. On the side of the State, a very great and a very justifiable value was attached to the conception of the Unity and the Unification of the whole Empire, which was expressed, and could be expressed only, in the idea and observance of Caesar-worship. This reverence paid to the Imperial idea as symbolised by the worship of Rome and Augustus "united," as has been said, "the peoples of the Empire from the Ocean

[1] Saint Ambrose, Epist. 21. See note at end.
[2] Duruy, iv. p. 59.

to the Syrian desert."[1] In very fact only some kind of a religion could weld together such a congeries into any semblance of a unity of sentiment, and Augustus' surpassing genius in devising the idea can never be sufficiently admired. "The national religion was the foundation as well of Latin Rome as of the Roma communis omnium patria; the spiritual symbol of the political union. This foundation was sapped, this symbol rejected by the Christians, and by the Christians first and alone."[2] Christianity has thus been compared to militant republicanism in a monarchical country. Its creed was severed both from nationality and from the one loyal recognition of nationality which the Government could demand. So political alike in its origin and its object was this Caesar-worship that its "priests" continued even in Christian times, and Christians discharged this function. It was not, as in the Sassanid Empire, religious zeal which dictated the persecution of Dissenters and strengthened thereby the new Sassanid monarchy, by binding the inhabitants of Persia in closer bonds of unity.[3] It was not as the fierceness of the Mahometan religion which produced "the general resemblance of manners and opinions" throughout the Empire of the Caliphs in the eighth century.[4] The temper of the Roman Imperial Government was not that of a bigot or fanatic. The famous epigram of Gibbon's expresses, even if with some exaggeration, the tone of the age. "The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosopher as equally false; and by the magistrate as equally useful."[5] But all, people, philosopher, and magistrate alike, must be prepared to recognise in this Caesar-worship the one great "symbol of Roman Imperial Unity."[6]

The State therefore demanded this recognition from time to time as a sign of loyalty. The Christian promptly refused it as a sin of disloyalty to his God. The State is unable to understand the Christian's objections. The Christian is unable to appreciate the political interpretation which the State puts upon the religious act, which too is really all that the State cares about. The Christian was regarded in consequence by the State as treasonable and disloyal, and the rapid growth

[1] Neumann, p. 10.
[2] Mommsen, *Expositor*, vol. viii. p. 3.
[3] *Cf.* Gibbon, I. viii. p. 203.
[4] *Ib.* V. c. li. p. 493.
[5] *Ib.* I. ii. p. 28.
[6] Hirschfeld, p. 862.

of the organisation of the Church raised the question in due course from one of local or provincial control to one of direct Imperial concern. The State was regarded in consequence by the Christian as sacrilegious, idolatrous, and blasphemous, and the Imperial aspect of its demand was altogether hidden. War between the two was therefore from the first, we declare, inevitable because neither side could possibly understand the other.

We are not prepared, as sober historians, to blame either side for this, neither the Roman Government which persecuted, nor the Christian Church which suffered persecution. If to-day the Christian's view seems by far the more natural and intelligible, we doubt exceedingly if any such superior intelligibility could be predicated of it during the first few centuries of the Christian era, when men were mainly polytheists and accustomed to polytheism's easy tolerance, or atheists, and therefore still more tolerant, but first and foremost were Romans and citizens of the Roman Empire. It seemed indeed that the birth-throes of the new religion must needs be agonising. The religion of the civilised world was passing through Medea's cauldron.

And with this, one consideration and one only yet remains. We have tested all the historical records, whether Christian or non-Christian, with the same strictness and impartiality. We discover thereby a new religion born into the Roman world, coming forth conquering and to conquer. Whatever the hopes of the future life which it may promise to those who accept it, the only prospect for the present life which it can offer to those who are hesitating concerning its acceptance is that of suspicion, hatred, peril, torture, and death. It can promise no amelioration of their lot, but only a very certain insecurity of their persons. This is sober history based on sober evidence. To those who have gained the haven of the new religion's rest such considerations might seem unworthy and of small moment. But could such beacon lights attract into the narrow harbour the wandering craft from outside? The "secondary causes" of the growth of Christianity are *not* to be lightly dismissed. For it *did* provide a satisfaction, a hope, a confidence, together with a dogma and a compelling sanction for morality and ethics, which were not given by any philosophy or other religion of the day. It did cast the stone of discontent into the stagnant waters of Roman pleasure, and challenge Stoic

uncertainty and self-sufficiency with its joyous affirmations of faith, its peaceful reliance upon a higher and diviner power than that of human nature. There must be some sanction for morality in this life, and that sanction if it is not found in expediency, either individual, political, or general, or in pleasure, individual or general, can be found only in religion. Rome was dissatisfied with its sanctions. Where was the compelling sanction either in the Stoic doctrine of Humanity or the Epicurean of Hedonism? Yet the religions of the day gave still more wavering sanctions, or sanctions fettered by minutiae ridiculous or impossible. Then Christianity invaded the Empire, supplying all men's needs as no other creed or practice had hitherto supplied them. Such a religion did possess "secondary causes" of attractiveness into it from the outside, causes of its growth in very truth. It is equally foolish to deny as to underrate these.

Yet it is no less true that the would-be convert might yet be deterred from adherence, and deterred finally and decisively, by external circumstances. The doctrine of a future life might be acceptable in very truth to a man who could believe it. But when the cost of that belief was the loss of his present life, he might well hesitate before drawing such a draft upon the bank of faith. The Christian zeal was fervid and was Catholic. But when the enquirer saw that its reward was persecution, or at least unceasing peril, his own zeal to share that zeal was likely to be very quickly cooled. The pure and austere morals of the Christians were attractive perhaps in themselves to those who were sickened by the vices of the age. But when the Government appraised them at the price which was reserved for the most degrading and contemned iniquity, the inquirer might think himself not to merit participation in their virtues and their sufferings.

A somewhat later rival of Christianity, the religion of Mithras, possessed to all seeming most of that religion's advantages, the internal advantages, if we may so describe them, and laboured under no single one of its very great external disadvantages. Mithras in consequence won numerous worshippers in wellnigh every quarter of the empire, and especially among the troops. The Mithraic cult challenged Christianity as its most dangerous rival. It was not the foe of the State but was patronised by the State. It too promised to its adherents sanctification, adoration, a compelling Sanction, a future life of bliss, and all these were combined with

esteem and happiness in this present life. Christianity could but promise hatred and persecution in exchange. Yet after long warfare Christianity proved the stronger of the two, and Mithraism perished.[1]

We may not underrate the "secondary causes" of Christianity's growth. But neither may we neglect the external circumstances which promised only, it might seem, too surely to destroy it altogether. Persecution may be a sign of strength. It is hardly to be called a cause of strength, when it is cruel and persistent. The blood of the martyrs may be the seed of the Church, but if the crop which springs up is in continual peril of being cut down, and is actually cut down from time to time, the harvesting may be a scanty one. Persecution may kill a religion and destroy it utterly, if that religion's strength lies only in its numbers, by a simple process of exhaustion. The opinion that no belief, no moral conviction, can be eradicated from a country by persecution is a grave popular fallacy.

Christianity, we conclude, answered man's needs and his cry for aid, articulate or inarticulate, conscious or unconscious, in the early days of the Roman empire, as did no other creed or philosophy. When, however, we face soberly the questions whence came such a creed into existence which could satisfy human wants as none other before or since, and how came the new, despised, and persecuted religion to overcome perils and dangers of a terrible kind with no external agency in its favour and every external power ranged against it, we do not feel inclined to deduce the rapidity of its growth and its victory over all opponents within the Roman empire from a mere balance of its internal advantages over its external disqualifications. We admit the vigorous secondary causes of its growth, but we have left its origin unexplained, and cannot but see as well the vigour and strength of the foes which willed its destruction and powerfully dissuaded from its acceptance. And there exists for us as historians no secondary nor human cause or combination of causes sufficient to account for the triumph of Christianity.

[1] See note at end.

§ 3. Rome and Judaism

If in Rome the Jews were, as has been said, peaceable and treated favourably by the Roman Government, at home in their own land of Judaea they presented a much more serious problem to the Emperor for solution.

For a century and a half the Jews of Galilee, Samaria, Judaea proper, and the parts beyond Jordan, were a thorn in the side of Rome, and this people may be considered to have constituted the one permanent failure of the Imperial administration. Elsewhere Rome had to crush fanaticism and nationalist tendencies as in Gaul. If the Jew always refused to learn an acquiescence which the Gaul in due process of time came to exhibit, and never would admit himself part of the world-wide Empire, this must be ascribed not only to his traditions and the exclusiveness of his religion, but also to the peculiarities of custom whereby he jealously preserved his isolation from the rest of mankind. In Roman eyes the Jews in the province of Judaea were a petty, troublesome and bigoted folk which displayed the most ridiculous pretensions and was swayed by a passion for independence which was as foolish as it was dangerous to the peace and order of the Eastern Empire. So far as mere belief went the Jew, like the Egyptian, might be as degraded and fanatical as he pleased, but he must be compelled to tolerate his Greek neighbour who lived side by side with him in the same land. It was the duty of the Imperial race to enforce such mutual toleration, as it is similarly our duty in India, and to keep the peace between rival creeds. "Gallio cared for none of these things," and this was precisely Gallio's one most obvious duty as a Roman magistrate. He would have been unfit for his duty else. But he cared very much, and it was his business to care, if fanaticism led to rioting. Propagandism was permissible enough if conducted without disturbance. But a propagandism or even a religion which cloked or was supposed to cloke political discontent must be carefully watched. It has been seen how the Christian, though essentially loyal to and content with the Roman Government, came into inevitable conflict with Rome. The Jew in his own land engaged in war similarly with the Government, not because his faith outside Palestine was propagandist, but because inside the country it was bound

up with old time-honoured ideas of Theocracy, and these ideas, despite every Roman effort, despite even the efforts of the Jewish priests themselves, which merit all honourable recognition, would always fashion themselves into political conclusions which were unfavourable to the claim of the Roman Government to peaceful obedience.

The root idea of the Jewish folk, that their allegiance was owed to Jehovah only, was indeed capable of very different interpretations. "Jehovah, Lord of the whole Earth!" Yes. But Jehovah was Lord God of the Jews, and the Gods of the Heathen were but vanity. The first and most obvious deduction therefore was that the Jews should conquer and inherit the earth. Hence the deep-rooted faith in the Messianic Kingdom of this world, though overwhelmed by wave after wave of foreign conquest, though discouraged by all the wiser statesmen of the race after the Babylonian Captivity, was still always ready to catch light and blaze up among the people. Neither is it perished to-day. For a distinguishing characteristic of the folk was its failure to possess or acquire any sense of proportion, of the fitness of things. Herein lay both strength and weakness, the strength of heroic courage, the weakness of ignorant and hopeless defiance.

But though the people as a whole could never learn the lesson of history, the impossibility of this their first deduction, yet there were many among them who, taught by Assyrian, by Babylonian, by Persian, and finally by Roman, offered other interpretations of the cardinal doctrine of their faith. The victory of Jehovah, declared the second theory, should be over the belief of men, not over their persons. And even those who knew him not might serve him all ununknowingly, like Cyrus the Persian, and thus Jehovah might be God of the whole world.

Jewish proselytism was thus vigorously and successfully prosecuted in all the lands of the East, but it hampered itself fatally by that adhesion to local forms and ceremonies which stamped the Jew of all times. If proselytes were to be numbered as the sands of the seashore, they might worship Jehovah, the one and only God, but they could not become Jews. The Jewish religious zeal for inclusiveness, differing in this from Christianity, could not consent to break the fetters which bound it, and thereby so failed of its object that it developed into a veritable religious exclusiveness.

That exclusiveness, it is true, was completely alien to the greatest leaders of Jewish thought, whether the prophet of the Return from Captivity or the Alexandrian philosopher. But it proved too powerful to be overcome. Receiving the lively stimulus of the new code of the priest Ezra, which maintained minutiae of religious observance as sole guarantee of righteousness and therewith of prosperity, the Jewish exclusiveness constantly gathered strength in its homeland from ever new sources. Local feuds and jealousies, kingly tyranny, stimulated religious zeal, and pari passu discouraged religious comprehension. Distinctions of creed, of custom, of culture, alike from Roman as from Greek, marked most strongly upon the soil of earlier triumphs, all suggested a third interpretation of the idea of Jehovah's paramountcy, of this idea of "catholicity," with which the rulers and the nation must needs settle down to be content, if contentment were possible.

The Jew, admit it, could not conquer the earth and impose his religion at the sword's point. The Jewish God could not claim the worship of all mankind and remain Jewish, a condition which the ordinary Jew refused to surrender. There remained but a solution of despair. The Jew must leave the pagan world alone. He must worship his God with that precision of ritual which was so dear at least to himself. He must claim the right to uninterrupted liberty of worship in his own way, and brave any odds, however desperate, in defence of it. Thus he would preserve for himself the favour of Jehovah, the God of the Jews. And he would leave Jehovah in His own good time to declare what was the right interpretation of the claim to Universality and Dominion.

Nothing could have pleased the Roman better than this third solution of the problem on the part of the Jew. And in very truth it has been this third solution which history seems to justify. But for the present in Judaea it laboured under certain disadvantages. In the first place it seemed very naturally no solution at all to the zealot, but merely a despairing shirking of the whole question. Then arose the difficulty of perception, which was a sore stumbling block. How could the Jew recognise of a certainty Jehovah's will as revealed in the course of events? It might possibly run counter to their most cherished and most fixed ideas. Moreover, in the world's events God must work by human instruments. To adopt the passive attitude of expectation

might be to deprive the Maker of his best tempered tools, and leave the work to be bungled by instruments of inferior quality.

Thus it was at best but a sullen acquiescence on the part of the Jew with a temporary compromise, when he submitted to the Roman political overlordship. He hugged the thought with secret glee that it was but temporary, how temporary the poor blind fool of a heathen could not know! He was ever tempted to speed its destruction, and hark back to the first interpretation of the root idea. Meanwhile the Heathen, it must be grudgingly conceded, might set up as many idols as he pleased in his own lands of darkness, so that he never set them in the Holy Place of the True Faith. Disregard, however, by the conqueror of this tacit compromise, whether of set purpose or of ignorance, kindled at once the flame of insurrection, and not always unsuccessfully. But now the era of the Maccabees, of the blustering and effeminate Syrian, was past. The Roman conqueror was as prudent as he was strong, and glad to admit the compact. With striking, well-nigh pathetic unanimity, Roman after Roman strives not to offend the scruples of this cruel, fanatical, and unintelligible people. And inasmuch as the Theocracy, the sole rule of Jehovah as interpeted and administered by His priests, might, in fact, be very much assisted by the political supremacy of an alien who admitted the compact, the chief priests and rulers dissuaded conspiracy and rebellion.

But in truth the basis of the uneasy peace prevailing in Palestine was but a common-sense recognition of facts, and this was hard for the Jew to acquire. He might worship Jehovah as he liked in the land of his fathers, declared the Roman, himself not incurious of the new Deity. But the old claim to inclusiveness was not dead, albeit the spiritual interpretation might be. And in any case such worship was better insured in and by an independent State, which might also be the starting point for the wider conquest.

Moreover, side by side with the Jew in his own land there dwelt an accursed alien, the Syrian Greek. He owned no worship to the Jewish God. He recruited the very legions of the conquering heathen, from which service the Jew for the most part held sullenly aloof. Exterminate him the Jew would but could not. Expel him he might not. The Roman peace must be preserved. The feud between Jew and Greek was none the less bitter and unrelenting because the former had taken to his own use the very language of the foe. Hate

was repaid, as always, by hate. The Syrian trader grumbled. The Jewish bigot chafed. But the heavy hand of the Roman kept the peace between them. New fuel was added to the Jewish discontent. The Roman stayed the conquest of their religion. Palestine must be free. The Jew would fulfil the mission of his tribal God, now under Nero as in the days of Hivites, Perusites, and Canaanites. The Jewish rulers were wiser. But they knowingly, and the Roman governor half unconsciously, were ever treading on ground undermined, which for all their care a spark might fire. The longer the peace endured, the greater was the risk, for the spirit of fanaticism grew stronger with quiet brooding "Lord how long shall the ungodly triumph?"—even with the wise, the patient triumph of the Romans.

In the Principate of Nero the Jew in Judaea, less wise than his brethren of the Dispersion, rose in final insurrection, without a like great cause to lead to victory, without any like chance of triumph as in the days of the Maccabees. The Romans may not have been blameless, but the petty exactions of a much harassed governor were no real cause of the rising, a rising stained with every conceivable horror of frenzy and of murder, a rising such as only bigotry could fashion, only the Roman know how to crush and crush not for one generation only but for all the generations to come.

§ 4. The Growth of Disaffection

When Nero succeeded Claudius in A.D. 54 the "province of Judaea," which had earlier passed through frequent changes of administration (a fact which did not make for peace), was composed of Judaea proper, Samaria, Galilee, and Peraea beyond Jordan. It was governed by a procurator, appointed at pleasure by the Emperor, and he controlled a small Roman garrison, never exceeding in ordinary times three thousand men in number. The seat and headquarters of the Roman administration were fixed at the city of Caesarea on the seacoast N.W. of Jerusalem and some sixty miles by road from that city. In Jerusalem itself was a small Roman garrison, and the procurator occasionally visited the city. For general supervision and military interference in case of emergency Judaea, like every other "second-class" province, depended on a neighbouring governor of higher rank with

PALESTINE
Statute Miles
0 10 20 30 40
Roads
Boundaries
35
36
33
32
31
Chalcis
SYRIA
ABILENE
Sidon
River Litta
DAMASCUS
Tyre
Caesarea Philippi
ITUREA
TRACHONITIS
BATANEA
GAULONITIS
GALILEE
Zebulon
Gischala
Mt. Asamon
Ptolemais
Gabara
Chorazin
Julias
Capernaum
Bethsaida
Jotapata
Magdala
Tiberias
Sea of Galilee
Gamala
Sepphoris
Nazareth
Taricheae
Mt. Tabor
Gadara
Edrei
R. Kishon
Jezreel
AURANITIS
Caesarea
Scythopolis
SAMARIA
Samaria (Sebaste)
Mt. Gerizim
R. Jordan
PEREA
Gerasa
River Jabbok
Joppa or Japha
Antipatris
Lydda
Gophna
Adida
Ephraim
Bethel
Bethoron
Jamnia
Emmaus
Gibeon
Jericho
Axotus
JERUSALEM
Bethlehem
Ascalon
JUDAEA
Hebron
Dead Sea
IDUMAEA
Scopus
BEZETHA
Antonia
Temple
SION
Palace
UPPER CITY
ACRA

Methuen & Co.

legionaries at his disposal. In this case, the legate of Syria was charged with this, as one among his numerous and engrossing duties. The procurator in A.D. 54 was one Antonius Felix, brother of Claudius' powerful freedman Pallas. He had been appointed two years previously by Claudius, and Nero left him undisturbed in his office. Felix' wife was Drusilla who had finally married him after a previously exciting matrimonial career. She was sister to the only king now left in the neighbourhood, namely Herod Agrippa II., the "Agrippa" of the Acts of the Apostles. To him Claudius had in A.D. 52 given the Tetrarchy of Batanea-Trachonitis, and Nero on his accession added to his dominions four Galilean cities on the Lake, Tiberias and Taricheae on the western shore, Julias in Gaulonitis, and another. A Jew by birth, he was none the less a firm friend of the Romans, and constantly assisted the procurator with his presence and advice, and, when it came to fighting, with his small army.

Already sporadic disturbances up and down the land claimed the attention both of Jewish procurator and of Syrian legate before A.D. 54, and a foolish insult by the young Emperor Caligula to the Jews' religion had greatly increased the perplexities of the Roman governor. Neither Roman nor Jewish historian quite appreciated these perplexities. The former was blinded by his prejudice and partisan animosity against the whole class of Imperial civil servants, from which the governor of Judaea was always taken. The Jewish writer also seems prepared to arrange the Neronian governors on an ascending ladder of iniquity, as if thereby to help palliate the Jewish excesses. The details of their rule which Josephus himself gives to us do not in the main endorse his unfavourable view, which he himself discards on occasion. The witness to Felix' and Festus' endeavours of the other contemporary writer, St Luke, is far more trustworthy. His Christianity secured to him a greater neutrality in his attitude alike to Jew and to Roman, and his simple tale of proceedings in which both were concerned is of the highest historical merit, striking with at least one shaft of clear light into the enwrapping mist of prejudice and hatred. From his judgment it may be necessary at times to dissent. But the impartial historian is bound at the outset to award this tribute to the Christian writer.[1]

The Roman governors strove for the most part manfully

[1] See note at end.

to deal with the Jews fairly and with tact. But a wound rapidly dealt is tardily healed, if the physician may enjoy even this measure of success, and Caligula's folly precipitated disturbances. Felix' predecessor Cumanus also had been a bad appointment, and he had bequeathed to his successor a sorry legacy of trouble. Alike in Jerusalem and in the country generally Felix found a widespread turmoil and insecurity alike of person and of property. Bands of robbers were roaming up and down, sweeping in adherents from every class of malcontent, debtor, and malefactor. The sect of Zealots, founded years before by one Judas of Galilee, were hardly distinguishable from the Sicarii, those robbers and murderers whose evil deeds load the pages of Josephus, and both plagued the unhappy land as they disturbed the unfortunate governor's peace. Felix acted vigorously during eight years of rule. Robber bands were dispersed, yet always reappeared. Daily assassinations in Jerusalem defied the Roman garrison. The mob was always the credulous prey of any fanatic. One Jew from Egypt gathered thousands together on the Mount of Olives, promising them that the walls of the city shall fall at his bidding as those of Jericho before Joshua's trumpets, and his adherents' excited belief stimulated by their lust and hope of rapine and of plunder was chilled only by Felix' appearance at the head of Roman troops. The mob was scattered but their leader escaped. This is but cited as typical of the state of the country-side. In the cities there was no greater peace. In the capital where the Jew was supreme the very priest plundered his poorer brother and mocked his destitution. Fierce rioting between Jews and Greeks broke out in A.D. 60 in Caesarea itself, through the Jewish arrogant claims of exclusive privilege. But the Jew's military skill in street fighting was not equal to his pretensions, and matters had gone ill with him had not Felix intervened to stop the rioting and despatch the protagonists of the dispute to Rome to plead each their cause before the Emperor himself. Nero, at Burrus' advice, decided in favour of the Greeks' contention, wherefore of course the Jew historian accused the Minister of accepting bribes. That money was freely offered him by both sides is highly probable. But there is no evidence of value that the case was decided otherwise than on its merits. Felix' reward for keeping the peace in Caesarea was similarly fierce denunciation by the Jews at Rome, who relied on their

compatriots in the city, and perhaps on Poppaea's influence, to push their claims. As such denunciation was the inevitable lot of every Roman procurator of Judaea, whatever his decisions might be, Felix must bear with it with such equanimity as he best might There was not another such uncomfortable post in the whole of the Roman provincial or diplomatic service as was the governorship of Judaea.

Whenever Felix appears in the history of these troubled years A.D. 52-60, we find him struggling with disorder, and crushing, so far as he could with the small force placed at his disposal, both brigandage in the country and rioting in the city. Difficult cases he duly refers to Nero. Pending decision he will keep the peace firmly. There is no good evidence to warrant the accusations of cruelty and lust so lightly brought against him. Helped by a Jewish wife he was able to understand the delicate nature of Jewish religious susceptibilities and here too he fulfilled the duties of a governor. The long story of the attack made at Jerusalem upon St Paul and his subsequent imprisonment at Caesarea, which cannot here be narrated at length, does the greatest credit to the Romans involved, and not to the prisoner only. Claudius Lysias' soldierly promptness and sagacity saved St Paul's life alike from open violence and from treachery, and he may rest quietly under the malignant Jewish imputation of brutality. He as a Roman could not understand the priests' fierce accusation, and not only handed over the case to his commanding officer at Caesarea with a frank, succinct, and true statement of the facts, but took good care as well that the prisoner should reach that city alive and unhurt, to the Jews' savage disappointment. No English lieutenant suddenly confronted by a Mohammedan riot in an Indian city could act more prudently or more justly than did Claudius Lysias in Jerusalem under very similar circumstances. Felix who tried the case could better understand the points at issue, and was deceived neither by misrepresentation of facts nor by the customary cringing Babu-like flattery of the professional orator. He had been governor over long in the land of lies for that. He gave careful hearing to the prisoner, to the accusers, to Lysias whom he summoned to give witness. He decided on a compromise, which was thoroughly typical of Roman prudence. Release Paul he could not, without thereby setting a lighted match to the tinder of theological animosity, and it was no part of the

Roman Governor's duties to add such a flame to the angry fires already burning in the land which he was set to govern in peace and quietude. Felix must "do the Jews a favour," even at the cost of keeping an accused man in confinement at Caesarea, and thus out of harm's way at any rate. The peace of the province was not only worth the price, but made it imperative on him as a duty. "Money," says the Christian writer, falling into the inevitable tendency of his time, "would have purchased his release." Why then was it not offered? There must have been money enough and to spare for such a cause. Did the Church not think it worth its while to release St Paul? Or did it or he disapprove of such a means? The latter may be the case. Yet what a handle against him at Rome would not Felix' acceptance of a bribe have given his bitter opponents! Neither did the Jews ever forget St Paul, so that he might have been suffered to escape quietly some months later for a consideration. For the very first case brought before Felix' successor by the priests was this one of the Christian prisoner. Release of St Paul at any time and on any terms would endanger the peace of the land, so excited were the Jews' religious susceptibilities. If St Luke attributes his continued honourable confinement to the governor's disappointed cupidity, he doubtless himself believed the charge with all honesty. But under the circumstances this is no reason why, judging the Christian exactly as we would judge any non-Christian writer (which is history's first and undeniable claim upon us), we should implicitly accept his judgment.

Porcius Festus who succeeded Felix as procurator in A.D. 60 would have been in a very similar predicament had not the prisoner simplified matters by appealing to Caesar and thus transferring his case to Rome. The only remaining difficulty was the discovery of some rational ground of accusation against him to submit with him to the Emperor. Both governors in fact have saved St Paul from the injustice of the Jews' private tribunal, but both have been anxious not to affront the Jews. Neither with St Paul nor with his assailants had they as Romans any especial sympathy. Felix as better acquainted with Jewish zeal and the questions in dispute realises better than does Festus how small would be the prisoner's chances if he were once delivered up to the local Court. But the more purely Roman Festus allows him none the less his own choice. Neither will condemn the

accused without fair trial and adequate reason even to do the turbulent Jews a favour. The Roman governor throughout in a perplexing and a dangerous case displays sagacity, firmness, and impartiality, though neither Jew nor Christian of the time could realise this to the full. And the governor's sole reward was that he did preserve the peace a little longer in his province.

Festus' other tasks in Judaea were similar to his predecessor's, his career of office being enlivened also by a hot dispute between King Agrippa and the Jews with reference to a view from the window of the king's new dining-room in his palace at Jerusalem. This, the Jews complained, overlooked and so profaned the sanctity of their Temple. They thus built a wall which blocked the view completely. Agrippa in high dudgeon appealed to Festus who commanded the Jews to pull down the wall. They refused, arguing with ingenuity that this was a matter of conscience, for, said they, life was not worth living if any part of their Temple was destroyed; and the wall was now part of that building. With Festus' consent they carried the case solemnly up to Rome, and there through Poppaea's influence obtained Nero's decision in their favour that the wall should remain. The conscientious objector was at times no less transparent and successful a hypocrite in ancient than in modern days, and Agrippa must do without his view at dinner.

> O wall! full often hast thou heard my moans
> For parting my fair Pyramus and me.

Even such religious objections must detain the governor from his harrying of brigands!

Festus died in the summer of A.D. 62 and his successor Albinus was no less successful in maintaining order, but won somewhat greater unpopularity for it. It was in the interval before Albinus could arrive that the Sadducee high priest Ananus, "a man violent and daring beyond measure," seized the opportunity to apprehend James, the brother of Christ, called a special Sanhedrim, and handed him with some others over to be done to death by stoning. Nothing illustrates more clearly the protection afforded to the Christians against the Jews by the Roman governor in the provinces than such a vicious tiger-leap as this when that protection was temporarily withdrawn.[1]

[1] See note at end.

Albinus was angry and Agrippa deposed Ananus. But with Ananias, the more permanent high priest, the Roman governor speedily became on very excellent terms, the one suppressing minor priests as composedly as the other the brigands. If it be true as it is stated that under Albinus' rule only those stayed in prison who had not the money with which to buy their release, the governor fell a victim to a vice customary to the East in all ages. And when, on news that he had been superseded, Albinus in A.D. 64 promptly emptied the prisons with a touching anxiety lest his successor should lack employment, we must trust that he bettered his own fortune by this sudden realisation of his capital. For he certainly did not better the state of the countryside thereby.

Albinus' successor was one Gessius Florus of Clazomenae, who won the appointment, it was said, through his wife Cleopatra's influence with Poppaea. The insurrection at last broke out in the second year of his governorship. It had been gathering for many years past, and the new governor's cruelty may have been the ultimate, but it certainly was not the chief, cause. Florus, repeats Josephus stubbornly again and again, set light to the rebellion wilfully by his wicked arts, intending to consume the record of his own misdeeds in the general conflagration. We may well believe that patience was at last exhausted, and that not only on the Jewish side. The war certainly brought to Florus neither credit nor profit, and this he may have foreseen. It inflicted on Jews and Greeks alike a desolation of misery which through the very dull monotony of the tale of its interminable horrors becomes in the pages of the Jewish historian, it must be admitted, as wearisome as it is gruesome.

In April A.D. 66 rioting again broke out at Caesarea. The Jews bribed Florus heavily to interfere on their behalf against the Greeks. He took the money, retired promptly to Sebaste, and let matters go their own way in Caesarea, meeting any Jewish hints as to the bargain "though most delicately made" with prompt punishment. Meanwhile disturbances ensued at Jerusalem. The Jews were heavily in arrears with their tribute, and when Florus sent to demand seventeen talents on account their sole response was to parade mock beggars in the streets asking alms "for the poor procurator." This annoyed Florus, and marching on the city from Sebaste he occupied it in force. Then when the Jews met his demands

for the surrender of the disaffected by the bland suggestion that a general amnesty would best meet the case, he started his troops upon a course of massacre, and overshot the mark.

The mob rose, barricaded the Temple, and repulsed the Romans in an attempt to seize the fortress of Antonia. Florus withdrew to Caesarea, leaving one cohort of troops only behind at the urgent instance of the party of Ananias which still strove by every means in their power to avert the final catastrophe. It was all in vain. Agrippa was stoned and driven from the city. The "Patriots," led by Ananias' own son Eleazar, forbade any more sacrifice to Jehovah on Caesar's behalf as an insult to God. A small Roman garrison at Masada was attacked and destroyed and this was precedent enough. A week's fierce fighting in Jerusalem between the "patriots" and the peace party, the latter helped by a force of cavalry which Agrippa had sent to their aid and by the Roman cohort, ended in a victory for the party of disorder. All the enemy were allowed to surrender and depart unhurt, save the little Roman force which continued to defend itself desperately. Faction fighting among the assailants could not avert the issue. Florus did nothing save send from Caesarea piteous appeals to the governor of Syria, Cestius Gallus, to interfere. The Romans in Jerusalem, enticed out of their defences by the most solemn assurances that their lives should be spared, were instantly massacred on laying down their arms, all save Metilius their commander who saved his life by submitting to circumcision. The rebels were masters of Jerusalem and had defied the Romans, as Nana the English at Cawnpore.

On the same day in August A.D. 66, it was said, the Greeks in Caesarea took final vengeance upon their Jewish neighbours, and saved the city for the Romans by a grim massacre, wherein 20,000 Jews perished. The scanty survivors were sent by Florus to the galleys. In every city, save Antioch, Sidon, Apamea, and Gerasa only, the example was followed, Greek butchering Jew or Jew Greek according as either party was the stronger. The wave of slaughter swept on outside the limits of the province and spread to Alexandria, where the prefect of Egypt set the very Roman legionaries themselves to cut down without mercy every Jew caught in the city. War, open and flagrant, was declared. And the governor of Syria, the war with the Parthians now being happily ended, was free to advance upon the insurgent

country, where recent events clamoured imperatively for his presence.

§ 5. The Jewish Insurrection

Cestius Gallus marched from Antioch at the head of an army of from thirty to thirty-five thousand men, legionaries, auxiliaries, cavalry, archers, and Syrian militia. King Agrippa accompanied the force. After ravaging Galilee from Ptolemais as a base, and plundering Zabulon, Gallus transferred operations to Judaea proper, resolving, now that the season was far advanced, to strike straight at the heart of the rebellion, the insurgent city of Jerusalem. The Jews had not dared to meet him in the field. A body of two thousand had been easily cut to pieces in a fortified position on the top of Mount Asamon. The Roman general was led to underestimate the Jewish power of resistance, and was confident that he could finish the petty war before winter put a stop to military operations.

The first stages of the march from Caesarea upon Jerusalem answered these expectations to the full. Lydda was found deserted, and was burnt, and as the Romans climbed the slopes of Bethoron, the Jewish opposition melted away before their advance. It was not till the van had reached Gibeon that the enemy appeared in strength, furiously assaulting both the camp in that position and the embarrassed rear of the column which was encumbered in the Bethoron defile. So active were the enemy that Gallus remained three days in camp at Gibeon while Agrippa sought fruitlessly to open up negotiations with them. Thence the Romans marched to the ridge of Scopus overhanging Jerusalem on the north, and encamped there, but one mile from the city wall. In the early days of October the assault was delivered. Bezetha, the lower city on the North, was stormed, carried, and set on fire. But the Temple and Upper City resisted all attempts to carry them. The stubborn bravery of the Jew, like that of the ancient Spaniard, was always best displayed in the defence of fortifications. Seven days the Roman storming columns advanced to the attack. Seven days they were hurled discomfited back. Upon the failure of the last and greatest effort, the Roman general gave the signal for retreat, drew off his men, and retired to his camp on Scopus.

For this withdrawal he has been most severely blamed by critics both ancient and modern. Certainly its effects were the most disastrous possible to the Roman cause. He could not, of course, know that the city was at its very last gasp, which Josephus declares was then the case. And every attempt that the peace party within the walls had been persistently making to induce surrender had been as surely as unaccountably baffled at the very last moment. Though the Jewish historian probably underrates the stubborn intent of the defenders, yet daring might still have carried the day. But Cestius Gallus, with winter coming near, chose to follow prudence' dictates, and began to retreat in the direction by which he had advanced.

Immediately he found himself involved in that most difficult, dangerous, and disheartening of military operations, retreat through a hilly and hostile country swarming with fierce and with jubilant foes. Every inch of the way as far as Bethoron was stubbornly contested, and clouds of skirmishers hung upon the flanks of the retreating column. But the temper of the Roman soldier once again proved true, and at no moment did the retreat degenerate into a rout. At Bethoron a rearguard of four hundred men was left in camp, and Gallus resumed his retreat by night, arriving by forced marches at Antipatris, where pursuit ceased. He lost in his retreat over five thousand men, all his artillery and transport train. And the gallant little rearguard which stayed behind to delay the enemy, and so secure the safety of the main column, was cut to pieces to a man. They were worthy of Rome.

As the weak resistance to the column of advance had betokened disheartenment and divided councils among the Jews, so their fierce pursuit after the column of retreat proved ominous of the future war and their present temper, fired by such encouragement. During the winter the Council of War at Jerusalem despatched its generals through the length and breadth of the land to organise resistance, from Gischala to Idumaea and Joppa to Peraea. Galilee was entrusted to Josephus, then some thirty years of age, who, though hampered by the plots and hatred of that notable patriot John of Gischala, raised, drilled, and disciplined, an army of 60,000 men. The fortifications of Jerusalem were strengthened. Internal quarrels might threaten the whole structure of defence, but to outward seeming it might appear growing

daily more formidable. The more quickly Rome could strike the better.

And Nero the Emperor did not hesitate. He was in Greece when the news of Cestius Gallus' failure reached him, and there he took immediate steps to crush the Jewish "patriots" once and for all. Never a thought of concession towards this folk "so nobly struggling to be free," never an idea concerning "the inalienable rights of lesser nationalities," seems to have occurred to him. No rights are sacred if they cannot be defended and maintained, and Nero would test this Jewish claim of right. In his grim determination to redeem defeat and quell rebellion whatever the cost, Nero did but display the temper of his race, of an Imperial race, throughout the ages.

He entrusted the war to Vespasian, who, as has been seen, had already won fame as a general in the British wars.[1] The army which he collected amounted to some sixty thousand men. Ptolemais was selected as the immediate base, and Titus, the new general's son, was sent to Alexandria, on the gulf of Issus, to bring up thence to this city the two Syrian legions, the Fifth (Macedonica) and Tenth (Fretensis). Vespasian, with the Fifteenth Legion (Apollinaris) and a large force of auxiliaries, marched, accompanied by Agrippa and his army, from Antioch to Ptolemais, his cavalry ranging Galilee far and wide en route, and driving the inhabitants to take refuge within their walled cities. Other troops joined him from Caesarea, including six thousand Arabian archers and cavalry. By the spring of A.D. 67 he held in his hand a powerful bolt of war all ready to be launched against a too confident foe.

Gallus' failure had taught Vespasian the danger of striking at once at Jerusalem, a task, of course, of much greater difficulty now than in the preceding year. He resolved to act securely and cautiously, subduing the country piecemeal as he advanced, and reserving the enemy's capital city for a crowning effort, where the last remnants of the fanatical foe should be cooped up and destroyed as the rats in the last standing patch of corn in the harvest field. It should be a grim harvesting, without many ears of corn to be left for the gleaning. And this policy allowed the disintegrating tendencies always at work among the enemy full time to develop, so that the streets of Jerusalem ran red with the

[1] *Cf. supra*, p. 201.

blood of Jew-slain Jews. This was Vespasian's confessed reason for his slow advance. Its sole risk lay in the opportunities thereby afforded to the foe for a vigorous offensive. But the utter rout of the Jews and their terrible losses at Ascalon, when they attempted such a policy, seemed to reduce that risk to a minimum. And in fact throughout the war the Jews remained helplessly on the defensive.

The first year's campaign, A.D. 67, was devoted entirely to the recovery and pacification of Galilee. Here the strong city of Jotapata, into which the insurgent leader Josephus threw himself, offered chief, and a valiant, resistance to the Romans. According to that leader's own statements, he judged the cause hopeless unless reinforcements should reach him from Jerusalem. None the less "he would die many times over rather than betray his country." Gabara was stormed and taken, and Vespasian's engineers built a military road thence through the hills to Jotapata, which the general was enabled thus to reach and completely invest by the early weeks of May. During the forty-six days of the siege, a notable one in which Josephus exhausted all the arts of defence, a flying Roman column under Trajan took Japha, and another under Cerialis penetrated into Samaria and stormed the chief hostile position on Mt. Gerizim, inflicting terrible loss on the enemy. On the forty-seventh day of the siege, under cover of an early morning mist, the legionaries broke into Jotapata. Josephus' life was spared, and he assumed the rôle of Vespasian's domestic prophet with an alacrity and success highly creditable to his wit. The Roman general proceeded in a leisurely fashion to complete the subjugation of Galilee. Tiberias submitted on his approach. Taricheae fell before Titus' attack at the end of August, its garrison being finally annihilated in a last desperate naval engagement on the waters of the lake. Six thousand of the more able-bodied prisoners were sent to Nero in Greece that they might be employed upon the Corinth Canal works.[1] The rest, thirty thousand in number, were sold into slavery or presented to Agrippa, who dealt with them in like fashion. All further resistance, however brave, was isolated and therefore ineffective. The garrison on Mt. Tabor was expelled. Gamala was taken by mining at the beginning of October after a month's siege, and Titus, after that the main bulk of the army had gone into winter-quarters at Caesarea

[1] *Cf.* below, chap. xi. sect. 2.

and Scythopolis, received the submission of Gischala, the last great fortress in the North. John of Gischala, however, successfully tricked the young Roman, and escaped to Jerusalem to become one of the many curses of that city. Many months were yet to pass before Titus avenged the ruse upon John's head. The coast cities of Judaea, Jamnia, and Azotus, were taken in the early winter and garrisoned. Thus, in the next year the Romans could resume their march upon Jerusalem without fear of danger either in their rear or upon their right flank.

Meanwhile that unhappy city during all this year of grace had been prey to the most bloody anarchy and demoniacal fanaticism. The Zealots, somewhat worsted in the merry street fighting and blockaded in the Temple by the moderates, called in secretly twenty thousand Idumaean savages to their aid, deluding their ignorance by the assurance that the other party were traitors to the national cause. A wild night of raging storm and massacre followed, and when the Idumaeans retired next day, somewhat abashed when they discovered the trick practised upon their credulity, they left an equal number of dead bodies strewing the streets, and the triumphant Zealots masters of the city. Having disposed of one party by slaughter and by torture, these too duly split into contending factions. Well might the Roman look on with satisfied amusement. "Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt." "The end is come upon my people of Israel. And the songs of the Temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence." Their feasts were turned into mourning, their songs into lamentation, and the end thereof was a bitter end.

In the following year, A.D. 68, Vespasian proceeded, as before, with deliberation towards the ending of his task. Peraea beyond Jordan was first overrun. Gadara in the north was attacked and surrendered in February, the fleeing garrison being pursued along the road to Jericho, until the swollen river stopped their flight and they perished by the sword or in its waters. "The whole country through which they fled was filled with slaughter, and Jordan could not be passed over by reason of the dead bodies." Placidus, Vespasian's lieutenant, pushed on to the Dead Sea, everywhere stamping out the embers of revolt.

Then finally Vespasian closed in upon Jerusalem and began to draw a ring of forts round the doomed city. At Emmaus he placed the Fifth Legion to garrison it, and diverged thence himself into Idumaea, laying that country waste with fire and sword. There should no succour come again to the beleagured capital from the desert nomads of the south. Thence returning, Vespasian placed another garrison in Gophna, and encamped towards the end of May at Jericho, where the troops joined him from Peraea. Here at Jericho another garrison camp was established. Tidings of the revolt against Nero in Gaul had reached the general, and he was eager to finish the work. He hurried back to Caesarea to complete his preparations for the final siege, when the news came to him that Nero was dead, that Galba was proclaimed Emperor, and that the whole Empire was in a ferment.

These events in Gaul and Italy now in truth claim our final attention, the tidings of which reached Vespasian at Caesarea in the summer of A.D. 68 and stayed his hand, so doubtful was he of what might now befall. The actual fall of Jerusalem was not reserved for the Principate of Nero, and the city had respite for two years. Next year Vespasian again advanced against it, and seizing Bethel, Ephraim, and Hebron, completed the investment. But then his army proclaimed him Roman Emperor, and the tide of invasion rolled away westwards to carry the general to the summit of his ambition. But Vespasian had done the work thoroughly, as Titus his son found, when in the spring of A.D. 70 he marched against Jerusalem to complete his father's work, and experienced no opposition in the country on the march. Then finally after a prolonged and desperate resistance the proud city fell and was levelled to the ground.

The Roman conquest of Judaea has been stigmatised in terms as extreme as they are of a surety unjustified. It has been declared, and that by no mean writer, to be "the greatest crime of the conquering Republic . . . commenced in wanton aggression . . . effected with a barbarity of which no other example occurs in the records of civilisation."[1] This language is hysterical and unjust. It is true that the Roman may have been ignorant of the "importance" of the nation which he "annihilated." Yet surely he had this in his excuse, that this nation had been for many years

[1] Merivale.

past a veritable forcing-bed of disorder, a hot-bed of disaffection and turbulence in the nearer East against all the best efforts of the Romans themselves. The race had added, in their eyes, to superstition bigotry, to bigotry ferocity, to ferocity murder and treachery and rebellion. Life was impossible upon such terms. It was no crime in the ruling Empire that it was compelled to substitute others.

That thereby the Jewish nation as a nation perished from the face of the earth; that the destruction of Jerusalem emancipated the Christian Church from the danger of Jewish restrictions, and from that very narrow spirit of Jewish exclusiveness which had itself in no small measure contributed to the overthrow of the city; that a legacy of scorn and hate was left behind to every age and people; all such and other considerations belong rather to his province, who would narrate the events of the Principate of Vespasian, Nero's general and conqueror of Judaea. We have transgressed across our proper boundaries, albeit of some necessity, and must return to trace, as our concluding task, the course of those events whereof the tidings, in the summer of A.D. 68, stayed Vespasian's vengeance upon Jerusalem.[1]

[1] See note at end.

CHAPTER XI

The Last Prince of the Julian House, A.D. 66-68

§ 1. The Reaction from Terror.
§ 2. Nero in Greece.
§ 3. The "Liberty of Hellas."
§ 4. The Return to Rome.
§ 5. The Revolt of Vindex.
§ 6. The Death of Nero.
§ 7. Personal Characteristics.
§ 8. The "Nero Legend."
§ 9. Conclusion.

"Τί σοι," ἔφη, "Νέρωνος ἀρχὴ ἐφαίνετο;" καὶ ὁ Ἀπολλώνιος "Νέρων" εἶπε "κιθάραν μὲν ἴσως ἥδει ἁρμόττεσθαι, τὴν δὲ ἀρχὴν ἧσχυνεν ἀνέσει καὶ ἐπιτάσει." "Σύμμετρον οὖν," ἔφη, "κελεύεις εἶναι τὸν ἄρχοντα;" "Οὐκ ἐγώ," εἶπε, "Θεὸς δὲ τὴν ἰσότητα μεσότητα ὁρισάμενος."

(Philostratus, *Vita Apoll.* v. 28.)

THE BAY OF BAIAE

CHAPTER XI

§ 1. The Reaction from Terror

IN the reaction from the fear caused him by Piso's conspiracy, Nero threw himself into his favourite pursuits of music and acting with greater energy than ever before. In all Italy Naples was his favourite city, and he sang many times upon its stage. When his voice grew tired he would promise the applauding audience in the Greek tongue, the only language worthy of an artist, that "Let him but have a little sip to drink and he would ring out some stronger note again." In the intervals of the performances he would hurry to the great covered bath near Misenum, which he built for the warm water of the springs of Baiae, and then back again to the theatre. But Rome called for him again in A.D. 65, upon the second celebration of his Quinquennial Games, and now he faced the public audience with the confidence which his successes at Naples had given to him.

With a natural pique he declined the Senate's offers of prizes for song and eloquence before the performances began. He would face his rivals fairly, and desired the verdict of impartial judges. First as poet he recited part of his own Trojan epic. Then he entered the lists anew as musician. The tales of his professional anxiety and nervousness are variously told now of his appearances on the stage in Rome, now in Greece. They may here be quoted in part of the former.

> "As for the Judges and Umpiers aforesaid, he woulde speake unto them in all reverence before he begun to sing, using these tearmes: That hee had done whatsoever was to be done: howbeit the issue and event was in the hand of Fortune: they therefore as they were wise men and learned ought to except and barre all chaunces and mishaps. Now upon their exhortations unto him for to be bold and venturous, he would indeed

goe away from them better appaied, but yet for all that not without pensive care and trouble of minde: finding fault also with the silence and bashfull modestie of some, as if the same argued their discontented heavinesses and malitious repining, saying withall that he had them in suspicion."[1]

He observed all the rules of his art, rules as minute as any canons of the Meistersingers, with all a Beckmesser's particularity. His song ended, sinking on one knee, and saluting the company with orthodox gesture, he awaited the verdict with an anxiety, not of necessity feigned because in fact the verdict was never in doubt. The Roman really enjoyed the spectacle, and cared not a whit for the "indelible disgrace" of the performance in the eyes of the aristocracy. But Nero's artistic suspicion was quick to catch fire, and this led at times to great discomfort in the audience. The applause must be sustained and regular, and the unhappy visitors from the country towns and provinces, more amazed to see their Emperor on the stage, and less practised in the art of expressing pleasure, not only clapped with weary hands themselves, but even disturbed the experts of the claque, and received many a blow from the soldiers whom a careful management had distributed through the theatre to regulate the cheers. To escape from the theatre meant peril to life and limb, because of the crush at the doors. Of those who remained seated day and night, some, it was said, died of a fatal disease, perhaps hunger or ennui. The Greeks, more keen-witted, feigned death, and were carried out as corpses. But, on the whole, this was less dangerous than to stay away entirely, which, in any man of the least note, was regarded as a sheer insult to the Emperor. The unlucky spectators of high rank had to stay and clap, enjoying the vigour and the insignificance of the cobblers and bakers in the gallery. Spies were everywhere, and it was better to be a tired artisan and escape with an immediate cuff, than a prostrate senator, whose feebleness brought down upon him a charge of disloyalty. There was one unhappy man who had the temerity to fall asleep as Nero was performing, and all his friends' urgent prayers were necessary to prevail against the obsequious freedman who denounced him. He was Vespasian.

Nero meanwhile was enjoying himself greatly. He appeared in the leading rôle in many a tragedy, as Orestes

[1] Suetonius 23. Philemon Holland's Trans.

the matricide (despite the unlucky suggestiveness), Oedipus the blind, Hercules the frenzied, and in many heroine's characters, wearing in them masks, copied after his favourites' features. Once, it is said, when he appeared on the stage as Hercules in chains, albeit in chains of gold, a young recruit on guard at the theatre door ran on the stage hurrying in his ignorant loyalty to rescue his Emperor.

Rome made merry of it all, and Nero bore this method of attack with great good-humour, though some of his predecessors had resented a license which spared neither the Emperor's public career nor his private life. But the Roman squib was as little harmful as the solemn onslaught by the daily Press upon a political opponent, and Nero endured the many doggerel rhymes which floated about the city to his discredit. We submit two only as specimens:

> "Now who can any longer doubt our Prince's Trojan lineage?
> 'Tis proved beyond all cavilling Nero Aeneas' kin is.
> For why? The one from burning house his sire carried away,
> The other his mother liberates from out her house of clay."

and again:

> "Apollo smote his foes with darts, and, 'twixt times, smote the lyre.
> Our Empire, like the Parthian, Apollo hath for King.
> But when we front the enemy in farther climes or nigher,
> For Parthia his bow he twangs: for Rome, the milder string."

Nero would not have the authors sought out or punished heavily if by chance discovered. One man indeed, Datus the mimic actor, exceeded all limits in an Atellan play. Singing a popular song in which the words "Goodbye Father, Goodbye Mother" occurred, he represented by pantomime the old man drinking, the old lady swimming. But even this gibe at the manner of Claudius' and of Agrippina's deaths was followed only by a command to leave Italy. "L'homme qui rit ne sera jamais dangereux," and Nero still had good sense enough to know it.

After a time he grew weary of Roman applause, and his darling project of a visit to Greece revived. Greece alone was worthy to witness his genius. The artist Emperor longed for the historic triumphs of the great Grecian festivals, panted for the discriminating appreciation of the cultured and quick-witted Greek. He entertained Greek envoys after supper, and when they begged him to sing to them and listened in rapt ecstasy, the Emperor swore that

only the Greeks knew how to give a hearing, only the Greeks were worthy of him and of his studies. At last there seemed no obstacle in the way. Piso's plot was discovered, the guilty were all punished. He left a freedman of Claudius, one Helius by name, to govern Rome in his absence, as Maecenas had been Augustus' deputy. The choice was a good one in so far as Helius proved capable and loyal to the Emperor's interests. Polyclitus was also left behind to help him. Nero himself with an "army of attendants," accompanied by Tigellinus, his wife Messalina, his favourite and mock-bride Sporus, and by Calvia Crispinilla, mistress of the robes, left Rome on September 25, A.D. 66, and crossing to Cassiope in Corcyra arrived at last in Greece, the long-sought goal of his ambition.[1]

§ 2. Nero in Greece

Nero remained in Greece, busy with art and song, for more than a year. Arbitrary alteration of the calendar brought all the great Greek festivals of historic fame within the time's compass, and he entered himself as competitor in all. To himself the competition seemed fair, impartial, genuine. His rivals, Terpnus, Diodorus, Pammenes, were to be dreaded as equals in chance if not in skill. Many tales were spread abroad of the unfair means employed by Nero to win the verdict of the judges over these, and of their happiness to encounter enforced defeat and win mercy by timely overthrow. Yet scarcely any bribery could be needed other than that of Imperial joy at success, and Nero's own lively anxiety at every performance seems to demonstrate that if he had bribed the judges he had little confidence in the efficacy of his expenditure. As the judges were Greeks, this seems not very probable. The second-rate writers of later ages enjoy themselves greatly. From overthrowing statues of his living rivals, Nero, in their accounts, went forward and cast down those of all previous victors in the contests, and, not content with this, took to open murder of his competitors on the stage. The tales grow in foolishness. The hostile accounts of the next and following generations refuse to admit any merit of the Imperial performer even in his own chosen sphere of excellence. The situation is full of irony. The Emperor strives to lay aside his autocracy to gain genuine triumph as the artist: the public sees only the Emperor in the

[1] See note at end.

artist who craves its approval; the critic denies all merit to the artist because, unhappy man, he is the Emperor. Few temptations can be stronger to a Prince of artistic talents, conscious of this shortsightedness of view alike in audience and in critic, than to adopt itinerant disguise, and put his abilities to the genuine test of an equal rivalry. It may very well be that the possession of power demands from the Emperor the sacrifice of his own artistic tastes that he may maintain the standard of dignity which has been imposed upon him by popular opinion or his predecessors' examples. Other and greater sacrifices are demanded of him. If Nero refused to submit and recognise the existence of bars to his cage, we may regard him as lacking in the sense of the dignity of his position, even as disgracing that position, and yet allow, heresy though it may be, some sympathy to the would-be artist, ridding himself openly of the trammels of an intolerable prejudice, and asking vainly that his subjects should for a little rid themselves of it as well. Yet in the long run the mob will have its way, and there may be rude common sense at the back of its demand that the Emperor shall be Emperor sole, and not artist, musician, painter, poet, or tragedian. A Prince who will forget himself and defy the mob has for his inevitable reward, whatever the artistic merits or demerits of his work, the artificial applause in public of his own generation and its contemptuous sneers at the Imperial "craze" or "mania" in private. And his work is as fatally handicapped in the estimation of posterity as are his competitors in the actual contest.

Nero, however, committed that blunder which admits neither of excuse nor of remedy. He took himself seriously.

> "Moreover in the acting of a Tragedie, when he had quickly taken up his staffe againe which he happened to let fall, being much dismaied and in great feare least for that delinquencie hee should be put from the stage: by no meanes tooke he heart againe until an under actor or prompter standing by sware an oath that it was not espied and marked for the shoutes and acclamations of the people beneath."[1]

The Emperor at least was happy in this, that the parsley wreath of victory was to him its own great reward, and not, as to his critics, the crown of dishonour; that the name of Olympian victor rang as proudly in his ear as any title of

[1] Suetonius 24. Philemon Holland's Trans.

Roman Imperial honour; that he deemed the acclaim which greeted his unbroken career of artistic triumph in Greece to be the due guerdon of his genius, not mockery hurled at an Imperial degenerate. Such blindness was its own exceeding great recompense. The artist who consoles himself with the thought of posterity has little success in his own generation.

Nero won chief prize at all the four festivals, Olympian, Pythian, Nemean, Isthmian, and not only in music and acting. At Olympia he drove a chariot with a team of ten, and though hurled from it in the race, he regained it in a half-dazed condition. Yet though unable to finish the course he was awarded the garland of victory. In the wrestling bouts here at Olympia he took the keenest interest, descending himself into the arena to witness the contests, and, if any pairs withdrew too far, drawing them back into the ring with his own hand. News of the Imperial triumphs travelled far and wide through the Empire, to the astonishment of its more remote inhabitants. Victory to the Spanish mountaineer, as to the Pathan of the Hills, could only be victory in war, and the Lord of the Empire had no other claim to fealty and honour. News came by swift runner to Gadeira, the modern Cadiz, that Nero had been thrice proclaimed Olympian victor. That city understood the news, but the people round judged that the Emperor had won great victory in war and overcome the tribe of the Olympians. Folk who at first hearing of a tragedian, as soon as he lifted up his voice in tragic utterance, fled in terror at the unwonted noise, could scarce appreciate a Nero's pleasures. The Western Empire looked on sulkily, while Greece basked in the sunshine of Imperial favour and generosity. At the Heraeum, near Mycenae, Nero dedicated a golden crown and purple robe: in the Temple at Olympia four crowns, three as of olive leaves and the fourth as of oak. Athens and Sparta, however, he would not visit, the latter, as the most credible reason is given, because Lycurgus' discipline ill-fitted his artistic tastes, the former for the legend of the Erinyes, the Furies whom the grim pursuit after Orestes the matricide had led to take up their abode in Pallas' city. And Delphi, it is said, fell under Imperial displeasure. Apollo in an unthinking moment forgot his rôle and uttered an oracle of doubtful interpretation. Wherefore he lost his Cirrhaean land which was bestowed by Nero upon his soldiery, and endured the desecration of his shrine. Yet the God, having

won four hundred thousand sesterces for a favourable oracle, had merely sought to cap it by remarking that Orestes and Alcmaeon had some reason for the murder of their mothers. Nero, the God thereby meant to suggest, had like justification for his deed. But the Emperor viewed the matter wrongly, and found the omission of his name from the catalogue of holy matricides suspicious. The poor God suffered for his worshipper's stupidity, a fate which never befell him in the palmy days of old.

The chroniclers narrate also at weary length and with undisguised enjoyment tales of Nero's enormities during his stay in Greece, of his plunderings and exactions, his murders and obscenities, and particularly these last. If the tales are true—and there is little to vouch for them save the prejudiced record of a would-be second Thucydides and of a scandal-loving biographer in a bitterly hostile age—Nero was by this time not only drunken with power and artistic glory, but well-nigh insane, at least as a moral agent. And this reacts upon the general sense. Yet worse tales are found in Petronius' romance. But such stories of disgust may be read at length in the ancient Greek or modern Dutch historian.[1] We see no purpose to be served by their repetition. And we hold, in face of the former's plea, that their narration does bring a certain dishonour upon the narrator, and is not the crown of the historian's honesty. Nero, Pythagoras, Sporus, Encolpius, Giton, and the rest,

"Ausi omnes immane nefas ausoque potiti,"

these must be left to the retribution dealt by the poet's hand, and

"La bufera infernal, che mai non resta.
. . . . . .
Intesi che a così fatto tormento
Enno dannati i peccator carnali,
Che la ragion sommettono al talento.
. . . . . .
Nulla speranza gli conforta mai
Non che di posa, ma di minor pena."

Their deeds were their own punishment. As Nero vainly strove to plumb the depths of Lerna's Alcyonian mere in Argolis, so we may shrink from the attempt to measure this degradation of an age which lacked the modern sanctions of

[1] Dio and Raabe.

morality, and thus deprecates a comparison which yet for its heroes and its sages it may undertake.

One more noteworthy task claimed Nero's interest. Already Demetrius the King, Caesar, and Caligula, had planned to cut a canal through the isthmus of Corinth, that ships might shun the storms and the delay of the long circuit round Cape Malea. Nero took the task in hand with greater energy, again quite careless of the customary evil omens, which the Divine machinery of melodrama never failed to exhibit to a familiarised and yawning audience. Not only the Praetorians themselves were set to the work, but Vespasian sent six thousand of his Jewish prisoners to help. The cutting was begun at Lechaeum, the port of Corinth on the Corinthian gulf. On the opening day the Emperor recited a solemn propitiatory ode to Amphitrite and Poseidon, to Melicertes and to Leucothea, tutelary Divinities of the spot, and with a golden trowel himself cut the first sod to the blare of a trumpet, and carried it away in a basket on his shoulders. Then he himself returned to Corinth, while the soldiers set to work upon the easier, and the prisoners upon the rocky, sections of the canal. But little more than a fifth of the twenty stades from sea to sea was cut when the work came abruptly to a standstill.

> "Rumour from Corinth," reports the late chronicler, "said that Nero had repented him of the cutting, for that certain geometers of Egypt had declared the two seas to be of diverse level, whence, were the Isthmus cut, Aegina would be overwhelmed by the sea. But," he continues sagely and with pretty choice, "not even Thales could have dissuaded Nero from the undertaking, for he was enamoured of the canal, yea more even than of his singing to the publick. But the rebellion in the West called him away. And indeed the seas are of the same level."

The learned Irish professor a dozen years ago ascribed the scheme to the Emperor's "folly and ostentation." "The project," he declared, "is now or ought to be antiquated." Three years later, in 1893, the Corinth canal was opened, and modern commercial enterprise approved the Roman scheme as the modern engineer followed the very course for the canal which Nero had suggested. The wizard Apollonius of Tyana had declared truly enough that Nero should never sail through

the isthmus. He failed lamentably to anticipate an event which befell after his devoted biographer was dead.[1]

New conspiracy was threatening, though the old had hardly claimed its full tale of victims. In June A.D. 66, just before Nero sailed for Greece, there had been discovered a second smaller plot with its headquarters at Beneventum. The details of this "Vinician Conspiracy" are the most meagre possible, and little else is known save the names of the victims. That it accounted in any way for Nero's attacks upon the Stoics we do not hold, inasmuch as Tacitus never mentions it at all. As it seems to have been centred at Beneventum it is possible that its purpose was to intercept and slay Nero as he passed through the town on his way to the coast to take ship for Greece. On a former such journey he had halted at, and turned back from, the city.[2] It is also more possible (and herein lies the chief interest of the plot), that the conspirators had meant to replace Nero by Corbulo. If the greater conspiracy had shipwrecked upon the unworthiness of its protagonist Piso, the lesser would not run this risk. We grope our way in a mist hesitatingly through all this story, for little but darkness appears on all sides. Annius Vinicianus was son of a former unlucky conspirator against Claudius' life, and himself had married Corbulo's daughter. He had served with the general through the Armenian war, and had been sent by him to escort Tiridates to Rome in A.D. 66. For this he was rewarded by Nero with the consulship, though he was not yet thirty years old. He gives his name to the plot, for the discovery of which the Arval Brotherhood pay thanks to the Gods on June 19 of this year. Then he vanishes, not even expressly numbered among its victims. Nero proceeded three months later to Greece. While there he had to appoint a general to the now very serious Jewish war. He passed over Corbulo in silence and chose Vespasian. Corbulo was not even reappointed to the legateship of Syria. Then, while in Greece, the Emperor suddenly sent friendly messages, not only to Corbulo in the East, but also to two brothers, who then were governors of the two German provinces, Sulpicius Scribonius Rufus and Scribonius Proculus, bidding all three come to him at once in Greece. They hastened to obey. The Scribonii were not admitted to his presence. Paccius Africanus an informer denounced them with accusations "suitable to the occasion," says the chronicler enigmatic-

[1] See note at end. [2] *Cf. supra*, p. 234.

ally, and they committed suicide. Corbulo on landing at Cenchreae, the port of Corinth on the Saronic gulf, received Nero's command to die. He obeyed instantly. With the one word "Ἄξιος," as the Greek tells the tale, upon his lips, he drew his sword and stabbed himself. And this was the end of Corbulo the general.

No other facts are known. Writers ancient and modern have combined to deplore his end and Nero's black ingratitude for his splendid services. In his last word they have chosen to see the hero's contempt for the bloodthirsty Emperor and for his own long fidelity. They marvel again and again that a Corbulo should have been so long faithful to a Nero. They imply that Tiridates was filled with the same wonder. They see Corbulo confess at the last his mistake "in ever coming to Nero save with an army at his back."

All this eloquence serves just one historic end and one only. If the historians have such good reasons to express, and if Tiridates really had occasion to confess, the wonder at Corbulo's loyalty, if Annius was really "sent to Rome as a hostage for Corbulo's fidelity," it is hardly surprising that the suspicion should occur to Nero himself. But this they never realise. Then Corbulo's son-in-law, coming of a doubtful stock, and the general's trusted subordinate, comes to Rome. A few months later he is caught in the act of conspiracy. "The whole combination," declares the German writer, "has very scant probability."[1] It might have had less if the surprise expressed at Corbulo's loyalty had been also less. Corbulo's own last word amounts precisely to the confession "I might have expected it," and to nothing more or less. Now the utterance, it must be confessed, suits a detected conspirator just as well as a patriot ungenerously treated. In vulgar language, if such for once only in a sober historical work may be forgiven, the cry "What a fool I was to come!" is not by itself a proof or even a suggestion of injured innocence. And the middle course, perhaps the sanest course, is also open, that Corbulo was innocent, but unluckily there were *primâ facie* grounds of suspicion against him. Corbulo knew, he must have known, that Nero had reasons for suspicion against him. If so, Nero was, ever since 65, likely to act upon suspicion. He inveigles Corbulo and the Scribonii into coming by a treacherous show of friendship. Obviously he thought

[1] Schiller, p. 229.

not only that they had reasons to suspect his intentions concerning them, but also that these reasons were present to their own minds. And a conjunction of generals of the East and of the West against an unwarlike Emperor was as unwelcome and serious a danger as it was certainly novel.

The mist refuses to lift, but a few facts loom out of it to the view, and these are the facts. There was a plot, and Corbulo's son-in-law was its mainstay. Nero had reasons for suspicion against Corbulo and others. Corbulo confessed that he might have known what would happen. Corbulo and the others were made to die. It remains quite unproved that Nero's suspicions, though they had grounds, yet were justified in fact.' Here the mist settles darkly down round the cairn which, if we could see it, must crown the top of the hill. There are splendid materials for historic romance within the dim-lit Throne room, but discourteous history must refuse to cross the threshold from the sun-lit bare antechamber. The whole story resembles a Dutch picture by the master Dou. The light falls upon a small central theme alone, a Corbulo's death at a Nero's behest. The most part of the picture is in the background, black, outlined darkly, now visible, now invisible, keeping its riddle unsolved, but suggestive of a solution. Only in the historic canvas we, more unfortunate, need a clear background to explain the central subject.[1]

§ 3. The "Liberty of Hellas"

Before Nero finally left Greece, he bestowed upon her, in return for the pleasure which she had given to him, a notable gift, no less than her "Liberty."

Hitherto the land as a whole, although containing "free" cities, had been under the government and supervision of the governor of the province of Macedonia, who was appointed annually by the Senate. The gift of freedom to a city meant in theory the entire emancipation from the control of any Roman official, and freedom from Roman taxation. Theoretically the city enjoying the benefit became an independent sovereign community, although in practice such independence was strictly confined to its internal concerns, and a neighbouring Roman governor had not seldom a very practical

[1] See note at end.

influence even over these. But to grant freedom to a whole district, such as "Achaea," meant the despoiling of the Roman Empire of so much of its territory. So large a bestowal of the gift was quite unprecedented, and Nero had some reason to extol his own generosity. It made no real difference to the strength in defence of the Empire save in so far as it diminished its financial resources. But it was a very dangerous precedent to set.

None the less Nero's Hellenic enthusiasm carried him away, to the gratification of the Greeks themselves both of that and of subsequent generations. The very words of the Emperor and the thanks of the Greeks have been recovered to us within this generation from a stone found in the wall of the Church of St George at Karditza, the ancient Boeotian city of Acraephiae, to the east of Lake Copais, and the scene of the gift is presented as vividly now to our imagination as that scene two and a half centuries before when the Roman victor Flamininus proclaimed to the Greeks that they were liberated from the yoke of Macedon not for Roman rule but for their own self-government. So at the Isthmian Games held at Corinth, whither as many as possible of the Greeks were bidden assemble, the second Flamininus, Nero the Emperor, came forward himself on the stage on the 28th of November in the year A.D. 67 and proclaimed the liberty of Hellas in a brief oration, which is the only actual speech of Nero's extant:

> "It is an unlooked-for gift, ye Hellenes, this with which I now favour you, save that from my magnanimity there is nothing which men may not expect. Yea a gift it is such as you might never dare to crave. Hellenes, ye who inhabit Achaea and the land called up to now Pelops' island, do you now receive liberty and exemption from all tribute, liberty which never, no not even in your most fortunate days, did you all enjoy. For you were slaves either to aliens or to one another.
>
> Ah me! Would that I were offering this gift while Hellas still was prosperous. Then would still more have had this joy of me. Wherefore verily I owe a grudge to Time, for that it hath forestalled me and squandered away the greatness of this favour.
>
> Yet now surely it is not for pity's sake, but of my own goodwill towards you that I bestow this boon upon you. And herein do I requite your Gods, whose care for me

both on land and sea I have never found to fail, for that they have suffered me to do you so great grace.

For to cities other men ere now have given freedom. Nero alone doth liberate a Province."

The thanks which follow, expressed by the High Priest, the Senate, and the people, of the remote little Boeotian city, prove that Greek city pride and eloquence are not yet dead. Doubtless many another city sent like praises to the Emperor, but Time has done us this benignity in preserving to us even this:

"Seeing that the Lord of the whole world, even Nero, the mighty Emperor, of his tribunician power this thirteenth time appointed,[1] the Father of his Country, the new Sun which illumineth the Hellenes, had made his choice to be their benefactor, and besides now giveth thanks and doth homage to our Gods for that they stand ever at his side to guard and to preserve him, and inasmuch as liberty, the eternal privilege of every land and of our soil, whereof in days aforetime the Hellenes were despoiled, hath been given and bestowed unto us by him, even the most High Emperor, the one and only lover of the Hellenes of all time, Nero, Zeus our Liberator, and forasmuch as he hath restored unto us the autonomy and freedom whereof we were glad in days of old, and hath added withal to his great gift, the like of which we looked not for, remission of tribute, which no one of all Princes aforetime bestowed on us in its entirety:

We therefore, the Magistrates and Councillors and People, do publish this Decree, to sanctify as at this present time the altar to Zeus the Saviour and inscribe thereon

'Unto Zeus our Liberator, even Nero, for ever and ever.'

Moreover to set up in our Temple of Ptoian Apollo by side of our ancestral Gods statues of Nero, who is Zeus our Liberator, and of the Goddess Augusta [Messalina]. To the end that these things being duly done our City may have performed all honour and all reverence before the sight of men unto the House of our Lord, Augustus Nero."

Thus Nero won new deification from the province of Achaea. As a compensation for its loss, he bestowed upon the Senate his own province of Sardinia, whose procurator

[1] An error: see note.

was therefore replaced by a proconsul, and, as the small garrison of auxiliary troops still remained upon the island, Caecilius Simplex its first proconsul had the distinction of being the only Senatorial Governor in the Empire in command of troops. But Achaea did not enjoy the unwonted boon for long. Quarrels broke out between the cities, so true was Greece to her ancient nature, and Vespasian abruptly reclaimed the land into the Empire, saying truly that the Hellas had forgotten what freedom was. But the Greeks always remembered Nero lovingly. Apollonius of Tyana would never visit Vespasian, "for that he had enslaved Hellas once again and proved Nero of greater soul than himself." Plutarch rescued Nero's soul from the fiery torments of Hell for this his love for Hellas. And Pausanias musing thereon thought Nero an example of Plato's saying that the greatest crimes proceed not from common men but from noble natures whom their upbringing has depraved.[1]

§ 4. The Return to Rome

The grant of freedom to Greece was the last of Nero's acts in that country. For suspicion begets treason as well as treason suspicion, and Nero's last few years had been passed amid thick clouds of doubt and punishment and treachery, clouds which hung on the horizon even of the clear air of Greece. And now at the beginning of A.D. 68 imperative messages reached him from Rome demanding his instant return.

In the Emperor's absence the two classes of men most bitterly hated at Rome, the informers and the freedmen, had pursued their gloomy way unchecked. The efforts after Nero's fall which the people made to revenge themselves upon Annius Faustus, Vibius Crispus, Paccius Africanus, Sariolenus Vocula, Nonius Attianus, Cestius Severus, and, chief of all the delatores, Aquilius Regulus and Eprius Marcellus, not only demonstrated the informers' numbers, their power, and their unpopularity, but also called for great tact and care on the part of the new Flavian Government. Even Silius Italicus the poet took to the lucrative trade. The freedmen also had, it seemed, under Nero's later rule and especially in his absence, regained that all-controlling authority which had earned them such dislike in Claudius'

[1] See note at end.

Principate, an authority carefully checked and straitened by Nero himself in the earlier part of his reign. Not only Helius himself was after Nero's death surrendered by Galba to the vengeance of the Romans, but his fellow-freedmen Polyclitus, Patrobius, and Petinus as well. Of the others, Halotus escaped, and Coenus survived for a few months. These men ruined Nero's earlier favour with the people by their rapacity and the executions which they sanctioned or caused during their master's stay in Greece.

And now Helius became alarmed at Nero's long absence. He probably was able to detect the signs of increasing hostility, and sent message after message begging him to come back. But mere letters failed to disturb the Emperor. "Though it be now thy counsel and thy prayer," he wrote to Helius, "that I return quickly, yet shouldst thou rather persuade and desire me not to come until that I may return worthy of Nero." At last the freedman, losing all patience, took the extreme step of quitting his post in Rome, and, travelling with extraordinary speed, appeared before Nero on the seventh day of his journey. The reluctant Emperor was at last induced by the tale of a great conspiracy working up against him at Rome to set sail from Greece, the land of his chief love. A storm so buffeted him on his return voyage that the rumour spread of his perishing, to the premature joy and subsequent repentance of the unwary. He landed in Italy after an absence of more than a year, probably at the beginning of the year A.D. 68.

Nero's progress to Rome was the progress of a conqueror. He made his first triumphant entry into Naples, reserving that privilege for the city where he had first made public exhibition of the Art, which now returned from Greece crowned with glories unmistakable and unsurpassed. In a car drawn by white steeds he entered the city through a gap new made in the wall, by which custom the victor in the sacred games of Greece was honoured. Thence he rode to Antium, and so to Albanum, and to Rome, where the same new gate of entry was prepared. At head of the Imperial procession came those who carried the crowns which had been awarded to the Emperor, one thousand eight hundred and eight in number. Those who followed carried banners high raised on spears, on which were inscribed the name, place, and details of every such victory, and vaunting Nero's boast that he first of the Romans gained such triumph. Behind

these came the triumphal chariot which Augustus had used for his state entries, bearing the Emperor clad in purple robe and royal cloak glittering with golden stars, and wearing the crown of wild olive upon his head, with the Pythian laurel outstretched in his right hand. Diodorus the harper rode at his side. Behind him came the "Augustians" and the troops cheering as in a solemn Triumph. Attended by the Guards, the Senators, and Knights, Nero proceeded through the Circus Maximus, the Velabrum, and the Forum, to the hill of the Capitol. Thence he returned to the Palace and Apollo's Temple on the Palatine. The city had put on its gayest festal array. The smoke of sacrifice and scent of saffron filled the streets through which he passed. Gay streamers fluttered in the wind through which birds flashed, and the merry folk pelted one another with comfits. As the Prince rode by, loud shouts were raised: "Hail, victor of Olympia! Hail Pythian conqueror! Augustus! Augustus! Nero Apollo! Nero Hercules! The one all-victorious! The one and only Lord! Augustus! Augustus! Voice Divine! Blest are they who list to thee!" New races in the Circus followed, Nero himself graciously competing. His crowns adorned the obelisk in his Circus or were hung round about his bed-chamber. And his image as the harpist God adorned the streets of Rome and was stamped upon his coins.[1]

> "And after all this (so far was he from letting slacke and remitting one jote his ardent study of his musicke profession) that for the preservation of his voice he would never make speech unto his souldiours but absent, by messengers sent betweene, or, when himself was present, having another to pronounce the words for him: nor yet do aught in earnest or mirth without his Phonascus by, a Moderatour of his voice, to put him in minde for to spare his pipes and hold his handkerchiefe to his mouth: and to many a man he eyther offered friendship or denounced enmitie according as everyone praised him more or lesse."[2]

The curtain falls upon the last Act of Nero's Triumph with his entry into Rome. It rises in a few weeks upon the drama of his tragic fall, his desertion, and his death.

> "Gives not the hawthorn bush a sweeter shade
> To shepherds, looking on their silly sheep,
> Than doth a rich embroider'd canopy
> To kings, that fear their subjects' treachery?

[1] See note at end. [2] Suetonius, 25. Philemon Holland Trans.

O, yes! it doth; a thousand-fold it doth.
. . . The shepherd's homely curds,
His cold thin drink out of his leather bottle,
His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,
All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,
Is far beyond a prince's delicates,
His viands sparkling in a golden cup,
His body couched in a curious bed,
When care, mistrust, and treason wait on him."

§ 5. The Revolt of Vindex[1]

"The astrologers are said to have predicted to Nero that he would sometime fall into great straits of poverty. To whom he replied cheerfully that he could make a living always by his Art. So great was his confidence that the pastime of the Prince could become the subject's means of livelihood. But others had promised him the domination of the East, others expressly the Kingdom of Jerusalem, and most had assured him of the recovery of his former fortune. And Nero, after that the disasters in Armenia and in Britain had befallen his arms, was encouraged, thinking that he had discharged the debt of evil fortune. The oracle of Delphi also had bidden him beware of the third and seventieth year, which he conceived to mean the year of his own death, not guessing that the age of his successor Galba was thereby betokened. With such assurance therefore did he forecast not merely long life for himself but felicity unbroken and singular as well that once, when his most precious wares were lost to him by shipwreck, he did not hesitate to say among his friends that the very fish would restore them to him."[2]

With this prelude the biographer opens the story of Nero's fall. It was at Naples, he at once continues, and on the very anniversary of his mother's death, that Nero first heard of the rising of the Gallic lands against him. Here we must quit Suetonius' guidance for a while to explain the causes and the history of this rising, which from the name of the chief rebel is known as the Revolt of Vindex.

After the conspiracy of Piso there was scarcely a noble in Rome or a governor in a province who did not find his chief guarantee of safety in the recipe once recommended by Pericles to the women of Athens, namely the avoidance of all mention, whether for praise or blame. Thus Lucius Sulpicius

[1] See note at end.

[2] Suetonius 40.

Galba,[1] who at the age of sixty-five had been appointed by Nero in A.D. 60 to govern Hispania Tarraconensis, had at first displayed vigour and severity in discharge of his duties. But, as time went on, towards the end of his eight years of office he became indolent and careless. For, as he said, no one could be compelled to render an account of his idle hours. Nero's power seemed very firmly based at Rome, if not on the affection of the mob, at least on the fidelity of the Praetorians. If any impulse to a rising were to be given it must be given somewhere in the provinces, and here too the *vis inertiae* was very powerful. It is absurd to suppose that a large body of men will be excited simply by moral indignation and by nothing else to endanger their lives in a treasonable conspiracy. There must be to reinforce that moral indignation some personal grievance, or national aspiration, or religious belief. Nero, for all the West cared, might continue his dramatic and musical performances upon the Roman or Neapolitan stage. Men might be angry at them and declare them unseemly and degrading. But this public conscience could hardly by itself engender revolution. Discontent and contempt existed in plenty, and the disloyalty grew the higher that one mounted up the social ladder. But this was a question after all involving probably sheer hard fighting with the neck in the halter, and against an Emperor who was sole representative of the Julian House, the most famous of Rome's families, who, moreover, had for over thirteen years being in undisputed possession of the Imperial power. Galba in Spain was quiet only because he feared to move. Otho in Lusitania cherished hopes of revenge against Poppaea's lover, but secretly. Clodius Macer in Africa was ready for any turbulence, if some one else would begin it. Verginius Rufus in Upper Germany was strongest of them all and had no personal liking for Nero. But he, curiously, had no personal ambition of any kind. The new prefect of the Praetorian Guard in Rome itself, Nymphidius Sabinus, was quite ready to tamper with his men, but he must have a reasonable hope of something to gain by it. There was tinder enough everywhere in the Empire ready in the early spring of the year A.D. 68 to catch fire. But who would be daring enough to strike the first match? None of the aforegoing half-hearted or cautious leaders, it was obvious.

But there was one part of the Roman Empire which was

[1] See note at end.

still stirred by other emotions besides those of fear or pique or military ambition. Gaul, Julius Caesar's conquest, had been very rapidly Romanised. The city of Lugdunum, the modern Lyons, owing all its greatness to the Empire, became a lively centre of Roman influence. Other cities, such as Vienna (Vienne), Augustodunum (Autun), fell quickly into Roman ways. Gallic nobles acquired the Roman franchise and seats in the Senate besides. Romans settled down in Gaul. The native Druidical worship fled into the remoter forests. In the new Caesar-worship at Lugdunum the country found a spring of loyalty and enthusiasm. Roman manners, Roman education, Roman speech, penetrated far and wide. The quick and versatile Gaul clad himself in the garment of his conqueror.

And yet the Gaul remained none the less for the century which followed Caesar's conquest always ready for an attempt to shake off the Roman yoke. It was not the taxation, accompaniment of the civilisation, which urged him. Other provinces fared the like and were glad to pay the price of peace. Gaul was no longer semi-barbarous, and inclined, like Cappadocia, to resent the very regularity of payment. True, Gaul had to maintain the armies of Germany, an additional expense at which men grumbled. But the land was a rich one and could afford it.

But the Gaul was besides a peculiarly high-spirited "patriot." His was that narrow local "patriotism," child of the soil, which is always the deadliest foe of an Imperial conception, if it conceives itself aggrieved thereby. This "patriotism" or "nationalism" is peculiarly a tribal instinct, and it was in Gaul that the tribal spirit always persisted most vigorously in opposition to the municipalising enthusiasm of Rome. Even though the tribal organisation had to perish, yet it would impose its very name upon the city unit which supplanted it, and Paris, Rheims, Trêves, Soissons, Metz, are examples of a round score of cities which preserve to-day the names of the old tribes, whereas in Italy and in Britain the tribal organisation has left very rare traces of the kind behind it. This fiery Gallic "nationalism" so long as it persisted in its hostile attitude to the Empire was a very curse alike to the Empire and to the land itself. Sporadic outbreaks might occur at any place and at any moment, and only time and that patient wise government, which refuses to be hurried into desperate remedies and never loses its head, could make

it in due course yield place to the broader saner Imperial patriotism. For he is not of necessity the patriot who impetuously blazons forth his slowly-decaying native tongue upon the very walls of his local town.

Gaul therefore for the hundred years after the fall of Alesia was passing through the restless and uncomfortable period of transition from the local to the Imperial instinct. Local patriotism measured its strength with small avail against the Empire under Florus and Sacrovir in Tiberius' Principate. Caligula perhaps was not so mad as he appeared to be when he led an army into Gaul. Gallic lineage rendered even the Roman senator an object of suspicion to the Emperor. Valerius Asiaticus suffered for it under Claudius, and it added weight to Nero's early suspicions of Cornelius Sulla.

And now at the crisis of expectation in the West, the mine was fired in Gaul, and by one who was an Aquitanian chieftain none the less because his father had been Senator of Rome and he himself was a Roman governor. Caius Julius Vindex, the governor of Gallia Lugdunensis, was a man of great physical strength and warlike prowess, of courage and quick intelligence, generous and ambitious, a man "fit to cut the strings which Nero ignorantly strummed." It was this Gallic chief who, relying on his countrymen's national pride, now in March of the year A.D. 68 first kindled that flame which wrapped the entire Roman world in its fierce embrace, and died not down before four Emperors had fallen victims in a space of twenty months.

The circumstances in March seemed to promise well. It would be hard indeed if the leader of a Gallic army could not pluck the independence of his native land from out of the general conflagration, if he could kindle this. But the governors of the neighbouring provinces would scarcely consent to a dismemberment of the Empire. Vindex therefore published openly as his programme only the deposition of Nero, and before actually raising in this way the standard of rebellion he wrote to his neighbours secretly, sounding them to see if they would join him. One and all however, either suspicious of his ulterior motives or thinking the risk too great, denounced him promptly to Nero, with the solitary exception of Galba in Spain. He, pursuing his favourite course of inaction, sent no news of Vindex' scheme to Rome. The Gaul, being now left no choice in the matter and hesitat-

[1] *Cf. supra*, page 115.

ing no longer, called upon his countrymen to revolt. Of all his neighbours it was evident that Galba promised him the best chance of assistance if success looked ever possible.

Gallia Narbonensis was an "unarmed province," neither had Vindex any regular troops under his own command. This made rebellion the easier. The local militia under local leaders of note, Asiaticus, Flavus, Rufinus, flocked to Vindex' standard. Nothing but the ardent hope of their land's independence could so quickly have raised the army of rebellion to 100,000 men. The greatest and the richest tribes of Gaul hastened to take up arms. The Arverni on the Loire, tribe of the national hero of old time Vercingetorix, and of the greatest prestige of all the tribes of Gaul, now resumed their ancient quarrel. The Aedui of Lower Burgundy, next in reputation, undeterred by their failure in Tiberius' Principate, and the Sequani on the Swiss frontier, followed suit. The city of Vienna, Vienne on the Rhone 17 miles S. of Lyons, despite its many privileges lately received at Claudius' hands, became centre of the revolt. To old tribal jealousies city rivalries now were added, and the feud between Vienna and Lugdunum was bitter. The latter was chief seat of Roman dominion in the land. Vienna therefore threw herself heart and soul into the national cause, clamouring before all else for the destruction of the rival city.

But these same jealousies weakened Vindex' cause. Disunion had always been at once the curse of Gaul and the invader's staff. The land had always "fallen by her own strength." Tribes which would fight desperately for national liberty in one year would hold sullenly aloof or fight for the Roman when, later on, the attempt was renewed by other tribes who themselves had previously been lukewarm or hostile to the Cause. And so it befell in A.D. 68. The tribes on the Rhine and the Moselle, the Treveri and Lingones, not only refused to answer Vindex' call to arms, but were ready to help the army of Upper Germany, did the governor of that district, Verginius Rufus, give them the word to advance.

It was in fact here in Upper Germany that Vindex' chief danger lay, and he was well aware of the fact. Verginius disposed of a numerous and an eager army, which desired nothing better than to be led against the national foe and despoil him. Long before any force tardily sent from Rome could reach him, Vindex' own large but inexperienced and

undisciplined army might be attacked by Verginius and the seasoned veterans of Germany, who were poised dark and menacing upon the frontiers of Gaul. Vindex must endeavour to postpone the threatened blow and give his raw levies time for discipline and practice. His own army knew well the reason for which they had been called together. By placing on his banners the words "Freedom from the Tyrant" he would not deceive them, but he might delude Verginius, who, a Roman to the core, misliked Nero. Or at least he might make him hesitate, and so gain time to seek fresh allies.

And this succeeded for a time. Verginius was reluctant to move without orders on behalf of a Prince whom he distrusted. Vindex won time to secure the alliance of Galba in his enterprise.

For Galba had by now been compelled to make a choice of sides. As soon as the news of Vindex' revolt had spread, the neighbouring governor of Aquitania had written to him requesting his assistance against the rebels. Vindex' letters also arrived. In great perplexity he summoned his friends to council, when Titus Vinius, commander of the sixth legion (Victrix), the only legion which Galba had with him in his province, pointed out to him forcibly that any failure on his part to take instant action against the Gauls was tantamount to complicity in their revolt. To deliberate was treason. Galba too was on notoriously bad terms with the Imperial "accursed procurators" in the province, and had acquired popularity with the provincials thereby. It is said that he was finally determined by the discovery from intercepted letters that Nero had commanded his agents secretly to slay the governor. It is perhaps more probable that this was an excuse subsequently invented by Galba in defence of his action.

Galba indeed could not draw back. He must either fight for Vindex or against him. He was encouraged by prophecies, and accepted Vindex' offers, being the more easily persuaded inasmuch as he himself was to reap most of the benefit of their association. It was openly published to the world that Vindex proposed to set up Galba in place of Nero as Emperor. This was the first object of the alliance. But more remained behind in secret articles, and Vindex stipulated that when Galba by his help became Emperor, he Vindex should receive his reward. Gaul should be detached from the Empire and

declared to be independent. So quickly did the fruit of Nero's Hellenism ripen in the West, where the soil had long since been prepared for it.

The pact between Vindex and Galba was of set purpose kept as far secret as the composition of Vindex' army allowed it to remain. Verginius must not be alarmed. And now Galba for his part proceeded with very great caution. True, he lent his name to Vindex' rising, which now therefore for the first time seemed to be assuming the proportions of a rebellion, and to be no longer a mere Gallic disturbance. And in a great mass meeting of his provincials which was held on April 2 at New Carthage he harangued the crowd, inveighing against Nero and Nero's cruelties. But when his troops pressed upon his acceptance the titles of Imperator and Caesar, he refused them. It was, he declared, for the Senate and People of Rome alone to grant such dignities. He was so far their Legate and naught besides. No real doubt however existed that Galba, if he could obtain this Senatorial sanction, would not hesitate to assume the Imperial office.

Galba's temporary refusal was certainly dictated by a lively fear of Verginius Rufus in Germany and doubt as to the latter's intentions. The legate of Lower Germany, Fonteius Capito, did not know his own mind and was therefore of no account. But Verginius was a man of a very different stamp. He had displayed no anxiety to act on Nero's behalf. He was but fifty-three years of age, had recently been consul, and was general of the strongest army in the West, which moreover was devoted to him. If Vindex' action and Nero's own unpopularity had proclaimed the Empire the prize of an open competition, Galba, despite the Gauls' support, was very seriously handicapped by his twenty additional years and his one solitary legion for an army, should Verginius enter his name. Happily for Galba, Verginius was lacking in personal ambition. He himself was of obscure origin, and high birth was still notoriously an advantage. Again and again his army, his friends, nay the humblest of his slaves, Pylades the forester,[1] hailed him as Emperor, but vainly. Entreaties and menaces were equally of no effect. He would not undertake the uneasy burden of Empire. But he might be called a Constitutionalist. Throughout the troubled months which followed he held steadily to the view that only the Senate and People of Rome could elect an Emperor.

[1] C. I. L. v. 5702.

While he rejected the Empire for himself, he would refuse to recognise any other Emperor unless he had been so elected.

Galba, kept informed of Verginius' sentiments by Valens, who was in the latter's camp, acted therefore very wisely in making a similar pronouncement at New Carthage on April 2. Vindex, as the one more immediately concerned, could be left to negotiate with Verginius. He for his own part set busily to work collecting troops. Vinius was despatched to Rome to organise Galba's interests in the city, and Caecina, later Vitellius' famous general, then quaestor in Baetica, was set over the Sixth legion in his stead. Things for a time went gaily. Galba appropriated all Nero's property in Spain and sold it. He collected a body of counsellors, a bodyguard, and as many odd legionaries and auxiliaries as he could scrape together. Otho in Lusitania joined him, to retaliate his private wrongs on Nero, and hoping also for the reversion of Imperial power upon the already aged Galba's death. Meantime he became his zealous adherent. But in May, when an incipient conspiracy in his new army had been easily quelled, news came to Galba from Gaul which plunged him into the depths of terror and despair.

Vindex, having concluded his compact with Galba, advanced and laid siege to the city which had been his abode as governor, but now refused to admit him, Lugdunum. The townsfolk were suspicious of the Gallic atmosphere and intentions of the rising, and their rivals, the citizens of Vienna down the river, were in the movement. Lugdunum, too, was bound to Nero not only by Roman sentiment and the common ties of loyalty, but by his generosity in the terrible fire which had consumed the town three years before.[1] It therefore shut the gates in the face of Vindex and his Gallic host, who came ostensibly in Galba's name, and defied them.

Then Verginius moved. Perhaps so long as he had credited the movement with the desire only of securing Nero's downfall he had seen no reason for hasty action. But Vindex had espoused Galba's cause, a precipitate step of which Verginius disapproved. And the investment of Lugdunum opened his eyes to the anti-Roman character of the rebellion. His army, too, was longing to be at the throats of the Gauls. And Verginius himself was Roman

[1] See above, page 290.

in sympathy as he was Italian by birth. The word to advance was given. At the head of the three legions now in Upper Germany, the Fourth (Macedonica), Twenty-first (Rapax), and Twenty-second (Primigenia), with auxiliaries from the Treveri and Lingones, and some squadrons of Batavian Horse, an army not short of 30,000 men, he crossed the Gallic frontier and directed his march upon the great fortress city which lay in his path, guarding the gap between the Jura and the Vosges. This city, Vesontio, the modern Besançon, refused to admit him, and he at once blockaded it.

Vindex could not allow Vesontio to fall. Its garrison expected succour at his hands. Raising the siege of Lugdunum he marched to its relief, hoping, if possible, to enlist Verginius' sympathies on the side of his agreement with Galba. Of the size of his army we have no sure estimate, but it seems to have dwindled to less than 25,000 men, perhaps through his proclamation of Galba. Approaching the city from the S.W. he halted his force still at some distance away, and sent asking Verginius for an interview. This the other granted, and the two leaders met in conference, while their armies lay outside the beleagured city watching each other hungrily. To the Gaul the legionary was an oppressor. To the legionary the Gaul was the eternal enemy of Rome, and only this rebel army lay between him and his fair spoil of war, the richest provinces of the Western Empire.

What Vindex could have hoped to gain from a conference with Verginius is far from clear. He had nothing to offer the rival general. Galba had already appropriated the Empire, and he himself was pledged to secure the one object for which he and his men were fighting, the independence of their native country. It was impossible to conceal all this any longer from Verginius. In actual fact the integrity of the Empire was at stake, and Verginius remained proudly and steadfastly its champion.

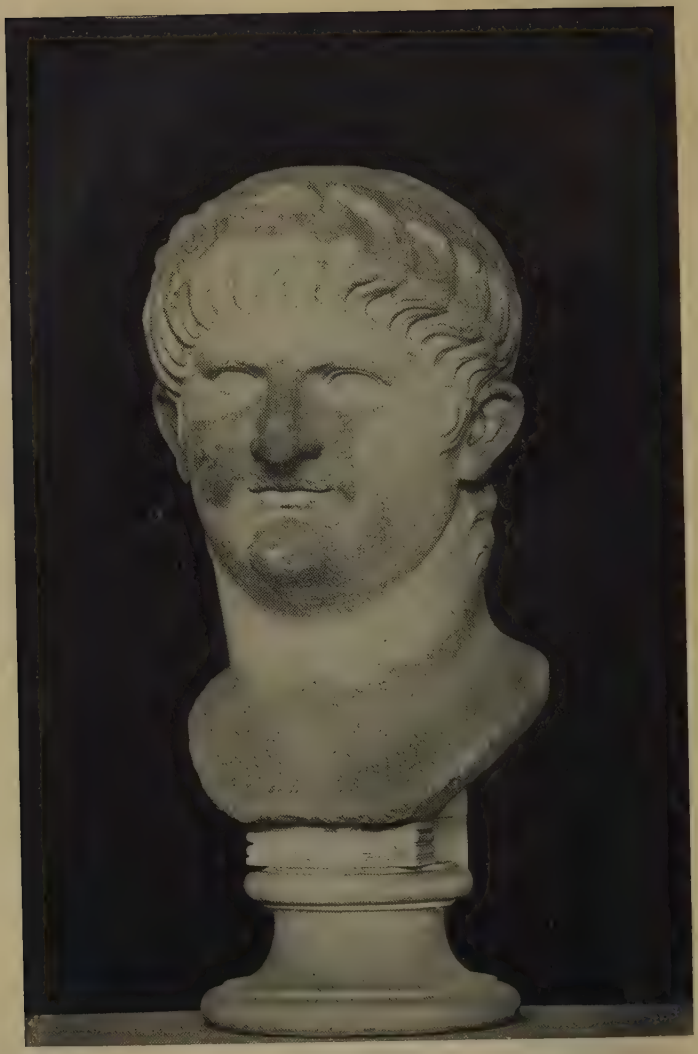
The interview, it was said in after years, ended in an agreement between the two, and it was spoilt only by the fierce impetuosity of Verginius' army, which he could not hold in leash. But this was of necessity the court invention on Galba's accession, when that Emperor counted Verginius among his loyal subjects, and yet had to mourn for Vindex' fate. This had therefore to be ascribed to a misunderstanding. Verginius himself was more honest, and declared

that in fighting Vindex he was champion of the Empire. And he was well accustomed to refuse his army's desires. The interview was a failure. The two generals withdrew each to his army.

At once Vindex' troops began to press forward in loose array making for Vesontio, between which city and themselves lay Verginius' disciplined legions. As the Gauls advanced, the German legions promptly fell upon them, and the Batavian Horse charged and trampled them under foot. Roman discipline, aided by the Gauls themselves, once more as in Caesar's day overcame Gallic fiery and ill-ordered courage. Vindex' army was cut to pieces. Twenty thousand fell. There was no remnant left which could be called an army any more. Their leader, who had set his hand to so great a work, which neither he nor any other might accomplish, fell by his own hand, and the foe quarrelled fiercely round his dead body for the credit of his slaying. The victory was as easy as it was complete. Verginius by it was master of all Gaul, however turbulent. His prestige was extraordinary. He had overcome the "foreign foe"; he was conqueror in yet another of the long list of Rome's "Gallic Wars." And when in after years the victorious general wrote the epitaph which should commend him to posterity's remembrance, it was this battle and this battle alone to which his thoughts sped back. "By the defeat of Vindex," he wrote, "Rufus championed the Empire, not for his own, but for his Country's good." And it was sober truth.

Thus Vindex, who had kindled the fire, perished at Besançon before a soldier of Nero's sending had crossed the Alps. But the work which he had begun moved none the less irresistibly forward. In that battle there perished with him the object of his rising, but its immediate pretence was to be quickly won, and all the more quickly by reason of his death. Galba indeed had at first despaired utterly, being left alone by Vindex' death between the Emperor on the one side and Verginius' victorious army on the other. Verginius might yet recall his men to their old allegiance if Nero would grant them the plunder they desired, the spoiling of the Gauls. Hence Galba fled to Clunia, a remote mountain city on the Upper Douro, and even contemplated suicide. But wiser counsels prevailed, and the old statesman extracted good out of seeming evil.

Vindex being dead, the compact was broken. Hence that



NERO

FROM A BUST IN THE GLYPTOTHEC, MUNICH

item in it at which Verginius had taken chief offence could be dropped. It was a small thing to sacrifice the independence of Gaul now that its champion was killed and his army cut to pieces. In after days, did he ever become Emperor, Galba could compensate the Gauls for their disappointment by rewards and gifts. He would always cherish Vindex' memory, for it was Vindex who had first maintained his cause as Nero's successor. But the whole compact should be buried in obscurity. It should be published abroad, and thus the tradition should be formed, that from the first Vindex and his Gauls had striven for Galba and for him alone. Men might not notice the story's inherent unlikelihood. So much for the future. Meanwhile for the present he could write to Verginius and insist as always upon the first part of Vindex' programme, the freedom from the tyrant, and substitute ingeniously for the now forgotten second part that of the preservation of the Empire.

The policy succeeded. There were a few days of anxious waiting. But Verginius made no hostile sign and kept his troops well in hand. One June day a dusty tired messenger, Icelus the freedman, forced his way past the guards into Galba's presence. He brought strange news. But a week since, and the Senate had declared Galba Emperor while Nero yet cowered in hiding. But Icelus had seen Nero's dead body before he left the city. Verginius' stipulation was satisfied. Let Galba arise and come into his nine months' kingdom.

Nero indeed had fallen, fallen by his very weakness, at the mere breath of tidings, before a foeman had crossed the Alps. The tale of the fall of this the last of the Julian Emperors carries us back to Rome.

§ 6. The Death of Nero

Nero at Naples at the end of March A.D. 68 received the first news of troubles in Gaul with great nonchalance. He regarded it merely as a local Gallic disturbance, and even, it is said, welcomed the opportunity which would be given him of plundering in very right of war the wealthiest of the Western provinces. He went as usual to the gymnasium and looked on at the athletes with undiminished interest. At supper worse tidings arrived, and he was so far moved as to threaten ill to those who fell away from him. But even then at his servant's solemn entreaty he desisted from his

threats lest he should hurt his voice. "For he was going to sing to the harp." And for eight days he took no other notice, neither answering the letters which came, nor issuing any commands at all.

Many of Vindex' proclamations, however, now came into his hands, loaded with insults against himself, and these at last roused him. A price of ten million sesterces was set upon Vindex' head, and he wrote to the Senate urging that body to take immediate steps to avenge him. He himself, he pleaded, could not yet come to Rome, as he was suffering from a sore throat. That Vindex should describe him by his old family names of Domitius and Bronze-Beard did not greatly annoy him. But when the Gaul's proclamations labelled him as a "bad harpist," he waxed indignant. Only wilful ignorance of the art to which he had devoted such toil could describe him thus, and he went the round of his friends asking them plaintively if they knew of any artist who could possibly be better than he.

But messenger followed messenger in quick succession, till Nero, smitten at last with sudden panic, hurried back to Rome. Noticing, however, on the road a tombstone on which was ensculptured a Gaul haled by the hair by a Roman knight his conqueror, he took comfort from the omen, leaped for joy, and gave thanks to Heaven. Of the punctual official omens, such as blood-rain in the Alban hills, inundations of the sea in Lycia, and the like, he took no more than his customary notice. On arrival in Rome he consecrated the shrine which was built at the women's expense in honour of Poppaea, and did nothing else till night fell. Then he sent a message to some few leading Senators and Knights imperatively demanding their immediate presence. But when they arrived in hot haste at the palace they found the Emperor busy with some new hydraulic organs. "Come and look," said he; "see, I have discovered how the organ can be made to sound a lower note and more tunefully." And he discoursed at length to his sleepy Councillors on the respective merits of the various hydraulic machines which he showed to them. "I will exhibit them all in the theatre yet," said he, "if Vindex gives me leave." But presently came the news that Galba had joined Vindex, and this at last well-nigh prostrated him. "So that for long time he remained speechless and as it were half dead. And when he came to himself, he rent his clothes and smote his head. 'Tis finished

with me,' he cried. Then did his nurse seek to comfort him, bidding him recall to mind how many Princes ere that had suffered the like. Nay, he responded, but it was not so, for that his lot was hard beyond all the rest, who in his own lifetime lost the Empire of the World."[1] But presently, when better news arrived, he regained his cheerfulness and dined sumptuously, regaling himself and his company after dinner with vulgar songs in mockery of the leaders of the defection. The Senate declared Galba a public enemy, and Nero promptly seized all his goods within reach, congratulating himself on their timely assistance to his poverty. And the Emperor was carried privately into the theatre, where, seeing an actor who pleased the company, he was much vexed, and sent him word saying that he took ill advantage of the Emperor's great straits of business.

"Nero," it has been said, "lacked the very instinct of self-defence. He let himself fall from his throne before any one had overthrown him."[2] Certainly the measures which now he took for his defence were ill-considered and half-hearted. He slowly raised a new legion out of the sailors of the fleet of Misenum, entitled the First Legion (Adjutrix), but it had neither received its eagle nor was its mobilisation complete when the end came. But apart from this there was a considerable force already collected in North Italy in preparation for the proposed expedition to the Caucasus, consisting, it seems, of two legions from Moesia, one from Dalmatia, and one from Pannonia, while the famous Fourteenth legion was on its way from Britain to join the others.[3] Had Nero put himself at the head of his troops, he might have saved the situation, even although they were already intriguing with Verginius. But instead he appointed Petronius Turpilianus, his old commander in Britain, and one Rubrius Gallus, to lead his armies against the rebels. Gallus went over to Galba and Petronius was deserted and left helpless by his troops. He returned dolefully to Rome where he was slain later by Galba, "his sole crime too great fidelity." Nero also sent his favourite Calvia Crispinilla as a suitable emissary to Clodius Macer in Africa, but whether she went to urge him to stop the corn ships' sailing and so starve Rome, or to incite him to take up arms on Nero's behalf, made little difference. Clodius started a merry game of plunder on his own account, and let affairs in Italy severely alone. Calvia

[1] Suetonius. [2] Callegari, *op. cit.* p. 12. [3] *Cf.* above page 227.

managed to survive these perilous years and died rich. Her fortune was remarkable and well-nigh unique.[1]

The toils were closing round Nero, and the more perilous his position grew the more desperate were the ideas which suggested themselves to him. Now he planned to murder every man of Gallic race who could be caught in the city, now, men said, to slay the whole Senate by poison at a banquet, to set fire to the city, let wild beasts loose upon the people, and sail himself for Alexandria, leaving the Romans to fight with beasts and flames at one and the same time. Such plans, if indeed he ever conceived them, were of course as foolish as they were both useless and impracticable. He assumed the sole consulship now in this extremity (for the fifth time in his Principate) at the end of April, but took little advantage by this. In his excitement his feelings varied almost hourly from fear to confidence, from confidence to tears, from tears to joy. "After a certain feast, as he lay upon his couch leaning upon his friends, he sware that no sooner was he come into the province than he would present himself unarmed to the armies' sight with no argument save tears only, whereby the rebels would be recalled to their fealty, and on the day following he would chant the Ode of Victory among his rejoicing troops. 'Which Ode,' quoth he, 'I must now at once compose.'"[2] In this resolve he has been compared to Wallenstein, as depicted by the poet:[3]

> "Es braucht der Waffen nicht. Ich zeige mich
> Vom Altan dem Rebellenheer, und, schnell
> Bezähmt, gebt Acht, kehrt der empörte Sinn
> In's alte Bette des Gehorsams wieder."

But in truth Nero was no Wallenstein nor could he have Wallenstein's confidence, and the ingenious modern writer might well have scanned Schiller's earlier lines as well:

> "Sind es nicht *meine* Truppen? Bin ich nicht
> Ihr Feldherr und gefürchteter Gebieter?
> Lass sehn ob sie das Antlitz nicht mehr kennen
> Dass ihre Sonne war in dunkler Schlacht."

Few of Nero's legionaries can have known their Emperor by sight. None had ever heard his voice in battle. How mockingly they would have greeted him acting the part of Caesar!

His efforts to raise troops were fruitless. He had lost grip

[1] See note at end. [2] Suetonius.
[3] Reinhold quotes the lines from Schiller's "Wallenstein," act iii. scene 20.

altogether of his people. Men said in after years that, if he got together transport waggons, he did but load them with theatrical effects; if he armed troops, these were but his concubines, cropped after the guise of men, and wielding axe and Amazonian targe. When he called out the city tribes, no fit person offered himself for enlistment, and he was forced to demand a certain number of slaves from every household, as well as a year's income from every householder. The Romans sullenly resisted. "Let him get his money back from the informers," said they, "if he is in such straits." Corn naturally rose in price and there was some dearth in the city. Men's anger therefore against their Emperor rose to fever heat when a ship arrived from Alexandria, bearing no wheat, but loaded with a freight of sand for the arena. Ominous signs appeared of the public discontent. Placards were hung round the necks of his statues with insulting reflections and puns which defy translation. At night men might be heard calling loudly for Vindex, the "avenger," to come to their rescue, pretending quarrels with their slaves. Portents now began to terrify him, and his sleep for the first time in his life was disturbed by ugly dreams. The doors of Augustus' Mausoleum flew open of their own accord, and a voice rang out from within calling him by name. And men noticed curiously that the last line which he ever recited on the public stage was the lament of Oedipus the exile:

> "Death is the lot commanded me
> By mother, father, bride."

Finally his last hope perished. For his very Praetorians deserted him. Deceived by their faithless prefects Tigellinus and Nymphidius into thinking that he had deserted them and fled to Egypt, they accepted the promise of large donatives, and were ready to proclaim Galba Emperor. The end was come.[1]

On June the eighth letters arrived saying that the other armies had renounced their allegiance. He read them as he was at dinner, tore them in pieces, overturned the table, dashing to the ground and breaking two cups of his chief delight, known as the Homer cups, as lines from the poet were chased upon them. This, says his contemporary scornfully, was his supreme revenge upon his age. Locusta the poison-witch was still in the palace. He demanded poison of her, hid

[1] See note at end.

it in a small golden casket, and went out into the night to the Servilian Gardens, along the road to Ostia, intending to flee thither with such officers of the Guards as he could persuade to go with him. But they one and all refused, some bluntly, some with excuses, one quoting cynically Turnus' last fierce cry:

"Usque adeone mori miserum est?"[1]

"Is it so hard then to die?" He lingered in the Gardens till midnight with wild fears and wilder schemes chasing one another through his mind. Should he flee to the Parthians? Should he throw himself on Galba's mercy? Should he clothe himself in black and make public pitiable harangue before the people, imploring pardon for the past? If they hardened their hearts, might he not beg at least for the prefecture of Egypt to be given to him? Indeed there was later found a speech of his actually written for the purpose, but men supposed that he shrank at last from the danger, fearing lest the people should tear him in pieces before he reached the Forum. At midnight he discovered that his guards had all slipped quietly away from their posts, and he was left alone save for a few attendants. He sent hastily round to his friends. They took no notice. With his scanty train, he went from house to house. The doors were fast barred against him. He went back to his bedchamber, and found his servants run away, taking with them the very casket of poison. Rome lay sleeping in the still summer night, and the Emperor stood deserted in his gardens with neither friend nor foe at his side.[2] He ran forth to cast himself into the Tiber, but again hesitated and retraced his steps, and craved some secret place of hiding in which he might gather his courage together again.

Then Phaon, a freedman of his, offered him his own villa which lay between the Salarian and Nomentan ways four miles to the north-east of the city. Nero caught at the offer. Just as he was, with bare feet, clad in a sorry tunic with a dull-coloured cloak thrown hastily over it, his head covered, and holding a handkerchief before his face, he mounted a horse and rode out of the city through the Colline gate along the Nomentan way. Four men rode with him, Phaon, Neophytus, and Epaphroditus the freedmen, and his handsome but unworthy favourite Sporus. A thunderstorm

[1] Vergil, Aen. xii. 645. [2] See note at end.

brooded over the city as he fled from it, and the earth, says the chronicler, was shaken "as if it gaped wide to let the souls of his murdered victims rise up to greet him." On his right hand as he rode out lay the great central camp of the Praetorian Guards, and he heard the shouts of the men within it, cheering Galba and cursing Nero. A traveller hurried past the little cavalcade citywards, and the Emperor overheard him mutter as he passed, "these are pursuing after Nero." Another stopped them to ask "Is there any news in the city of Nero?" As his horse passed a corpse flung heedlessly into the ditch at the roadside it reared, and his face was for one moment exposed to view in the light of the lightning, whereat one of his Guard passing by recognised him and saluted.

They crossed the Anio river by the bridge, and rode forward through the lonely country of low hills, honeycombed with quarries, and carpeted with grass and summer flowers. Presently a little path struck away on the left hand out of the main road, which still exists to-day, and is called the "Street of the New Vineyards." Here they turned their horses loose and made their way on foot along a track overgrown with bushes and with briers, strewing their very garments to pass over the thorns which yet entangle that way. So painfully they came at last to the back wall of Phaon's villa. Here the freedman bade Nero wait until they had prepared some secret passage into the house, and pointed him to a cave in the sandy soil to hide in meanwhile. But he refused the cave, saying that he would not bury himself alive, and stayed outside in the night air, trembling at every sound which reached him, the distant barking of a dog or the cry of some night-bird, the rustling of a bush or shaking of a bough by the breeze. Spying a little pool in the ground, he stooped to drink the water from the hollow of his hand, murmuring, "And this is Nero's Ice-water." And he plucked the thorns from his clothes, now torn and ragged from the brambles through which he had forced his passage.

Presently they came and told him that all was ready. Creeping on hands and knees through a hole which they had digged for him, he reached a cellar, and there lay down upon a pallet on which a scanty mattress and old cloth were spread. Hunger and thirst attacked him, and they offered him some dirty crusts of bread. These he refused, but drank

eagerly a little tepid water. His companions urged him to snatch himself away from the doom which threatened him, and he commanded them to dig forthwith a grave, measuring it after the measure of his body, to gather together carefully any scraps of marble they might find for its adornment, and to bring wood and water for the tending of his dead body. And all the while, at each behest, he wept, murmuring to himself, "How great an artist dies with me." "Qualis artifex pereo!" "The loss to Art!" We see the artist always, never the Emperor.[1]

As he thus lingered on till the ninth of June dawned, a runner of Phaon's brought in letters, at which he snatched hastily, and read in them that the Senate had met and, declaring him a public enemy, had demanded his punishment after the "Mos Majorum." At this he asked what manner of punishment this might be, and was told that the criminal was stripped, his neck was fixed fast in a wooden "fork," and he was then beaten to death with rods. In an agony he caught up two daggers which he had brought with him, and tried their edge. Then he laid them down again, saying that the time was not yet come. Now he implored Sporus to begin to wail and lament his death. Now he begged him or some other of his companions to show him how to die, and so to help him by example to the endurance of death. Now he struck at Sporus, who fled in terror. He bewailed his own timorousness, crying now in Greek and now in Latin, "It is not seemly, Nero! Nero, it is not seemly! One should be steadfast in such sorrows! Come, rouse thyself!"

But now horsemen were approaching with orders to take him, and the noise of their riding reached his ears. He shook with terror, murmuring even now a line from Homer:

> Ἵππων μ' ὠκυπόδων ἀμφὶ κτύπος οὔατα βάλλει.[2]
>
> "The sound of horses fleet of foot striketh upon mine ear."

and, so saying, he caught up a dagger and plunged it into his throat, Epaphroditus helping him.

As he lay dying, a centurion broke in upon them, and running up to the Emperor sought to stanch the flow of blood with his cloak. "Too late," Nero muttered; "this is loyalty!" and with that he died.

[1] See note at end.

[2] Iliad x. 535.

§ 7. Nero's Appearance and Character

Nero's personal appearance and his character have been carefully described by ancient authorities. He was of medium stature, with fair hair, grey eyes, and a handsome face, spoiled somewhat by a freckled skin and the habitual scowl of the eyebrows which is the result of short sight. His neck was thick, his stomach prominent, his legs slender. His health was very good, as in fourteen years he fell ill only three times, and then not seriously, and this despite his manner of living. Perhaps the "Oxyporium" medicine which he used to assist digestion and was highly approved by the medical authorities was of real service. He took great care of his dress and of his personal appearance, piling up his abundant hair in tiers above his head, and preferring the loose flowing garments of the lyrist to the simpler and severer Roman dress. For a public singer, however, his voice was over harsh and his breath too short, which may explain the anxious attention which he devoted to all the rules of the musical profession. One bust of him is curiously Napoleonic in likeness; the bloated appearance of another is due to the discoloration of the stone.

Of the quality with which he is largely credited in popular works, that of fear, I find no justification in the record nor any trace in the busts which are extant. Determination, and a certain ferocity rather, seem characteristic of these last. The suspicion betrayed in them is perhaps due to his scowl, the result, as has been said, of his inferior eyesight, But it is ill work judging of character from portraits alone, and the facts of Nero's life as narrated exhibit only towards the close any marked suspicion, cruelty, or irresolution, in general. That he would always strike for his own power, and strike mercilessly, that at a dangerous crisis he would lose all self-control completely, are certain facts. But these are not of necessity marks of a coward, and the record as a whole does not justify the charge.

He was extravagant and luxurious, loving ostentation and parade. Upon his artist favourites he lavished gifts which his Exchequer could ill afford, and any remonstrance only excited the stubbornness of his character, which was a marked feature in it. His generosity was open and reckless. He sent all the way to Egypt for a physician to attend upon a sick friend. Neither thrift can be laid to his credit nor

parsimony to his discredit. His taste for gorgeous display of gold, silver, and colours, was exhibited in profusion at his every appearance in public, and if any whim seized him he never stayed to count its cost. For Babylonian tapestry which had cost Cato eight hundred thousand sesterces he paid four million without a murmur. Successful rivalry in the display of wealth he could not tolerate. The Prince must outvie all his contemporaries, and in the eager competition of his day for the crystal coloured vases, known as "Myrrhine" vases, he outdistanced all by acquiring one valued at a million sesterces. The vase which Petronius at his death destroyed, lest it should come into Nero's keeping, was worth not a third of this sum. Among jewels, the Emperor's favourite was the pearl, and he scattered it in abundance about his private apartments. Despite the magnificence, however, of his entertainments and feasts, charges of excess in eating or in drinking are not brought against him. Great wealth finds its outlay in table display and the refinements of good fare more usually than in vulgar gluttony and excess. His craving for undying fame was natural in a young Prince, but chose strange methods. His love of music, of song, and of the drama, in preference to the sports of the arena, has been already illustrated. In this, his Hellenism overcame his Roman birth. It was more typical of the latter that his curiosity in magic and divination led him to make researches and inquiries in the Magic Art, which were unsparing and never tired. To this typically Roman passion of his must be ascribed his request to Tiridates that he might be initiated into the mystic Mithraic rites. And his very avoidance of the Eleusinian mysteries when he was in Greece indicated his firm belief in them and their requirements. Like Louis XI. he carried about with him a little image, "given him once by an unknown common fellow," and paid it great devotion, as the detection of a conspiracy (probably the Pisonian) followed immediately after he had received it. By its aid, he declared, he could foretell the future. But for the authorised religions of the day he professed no small contempt, and the complacent scorn with which he regarded the customary omens and portents of the reign might be curious in one who had so firm a belief in magic, were they not discredited already, alike by their vulgarity and their amusing inefficacy. The combination of a sturdy everyday common-sense, which Nero

seems to have possessed, with a superstitious belief in magic, is neither impossible nor indeed infrequent. It is a straight stick without a twist in it.

A few moderns, horrified at the tales of his vice, have declared that Nero must have been, in De Quincey's words, "in a true medical sense, insane." This insanity, declares another,[1] is Nero's one and only salvation. And a third[2] has prepared for the unfortunate Prince a precise time-table for his attacks of "periodic mania," from which it appears not only that he enjoyed some two years' sanity out of ten years of life, but also that most of the world is mad if we only knew it, and could see in the symptoms of wit, rhyming, eloquence, vigour, self-esteem, and restlessness, but the second, the only lengthy, stage of this melancholy madness. This position may of course be taken—to no one's profit, but Nero then is not more mad than most. The theory of the Emperor's private and peculiar periodic mania is at once contradicted by ancient testimony, which the author of the theory wrests into an impossible interpretation, and by the facts of Nero's Principate. His horrible viciousness as regards men and women is not to be denied, even by the fact of his excellent health. But again, the combination of moral vice and perfect intellectual sanity is not an impossible one. How far that vice is to be laid at the door of his inherited nature, or his upbringing by Agrippina and Seneca, or his possession, while still a youth, of absolute power, or an inherent depravity, we cannot judge, at least accurately enough to apportion their right proportion of the blame to each of the four causes. The combination of such four causes is indeed mercifully rare. And if once the Prince in such evil case denied, or was encouraged to deny, the inherited duty of a common morality, based either on common practice or philosophy's hypotheses (medicine apparently was in no position to deny him his desires), there existed for him no sanction of Religion whose claim as the final arbiter of conduct he could admit. Once and for all we condemn, but we do not measure, the sin.[3]

§ 8. The "Nero-Legend"

Nero, the "last of the House of the Caesars," died on the ninth of June A.D. 68 in the thirty-first year of his age, after a reign of thirteen years seven months and twenty-seven days.

[1] Raabe. [2] Wiedemeister. [3] See note at end.

He perished by his own hand within a few miles of the city where the populace was wild with joy at his overthrow, decking themselves with caps of liberty, casting down and breaking into fragments his statues, and chasing his favourites for their lives through the streets, even before they knew that he was dead. The modern literary artist can depict the Emperor, deserted, abandoned, hated by wellnigh all the living, surrounded only by the phantom shades of the Princes of his House, who point the finger of wonder at their last descendant, asking with mute glance "And is this actor the last word of this our Empire?" And by his dead body there passes the long ghostly procession of the spirits of his victims, trembling in silent joy and triumph.[1] To the historian but a little is wanting to conclude the story of the last Julian Emperor.

His conquerors were merciful to the body of the dead Prince, and Icelus, Galba's freedman, whom Nero had imprisoned at the beginning of the whole turmoil, allowed him honourable burial. His body, wrapped in white linen interwoven with gold thread, was burned in some state, and his ashes, in an urn of porphyry, were placed by his old nurses Ecloge and Alexandria, and by Acte, his first love, in the family tomb of the Domitii upon the "Hill of the Gardens," a spur of the Pincian Hill. The living were not so gently treated. Nymphidius Sabinus, who now with Icelus took over the direction of affairs, allowed the mob free play with any objects of their hatred whom they could catch. Sporus indeed escaped to become the favourite again of Nymphidius himself and afterwards of Otho. Epaphroditus survived until Domitian many years later slew him for his share in Nero's death. Tigellinus, though by reason of his ill-health he had played no part in the final tragedy, was the most loathed, and the most justly loathed, of all the dead Prince's ministers and agents of vice and cruelty. He was pursued by popular wrath and clamours for his death with a persistent ferocity more characteristic of the Parisian than of the Roman mob. But though deprived of his prefecture, he bought his life of Galba's minister Vinius, and retired to a life of debauchery at the pleasant town of Sinuessa. But on Otho's usurpation of Galba's power in the early days of A.D. 69, popular hatred again demanded its victim, and this time with success, and Tigellinus slew himself at Sinuessa. Over

[1] Beulé, p. 400.

his grave the great Roman historian writes the most damning epitaph which has ever been penned by the hand of man. "Infamem vitam foedavit etiam exitu sero et inhonesto." But Helius, Polyclitus, Patrobius, and others, were executed by Galba, and the mob disposed of lesser victims, murdering them by crushing them beneath Nero's falling statues, rending them in pieces, driving heavy waggons over their bodies, so that one Junius Mauricus declared to the Senate that they might yet be glad if Nero could return to life.[1]

And a curious reversal of feeling as regards Nero himself soon displayed itself among the lowest classes of Rome. While all the higher ranks of Roman Society and the many families which had to mourn Nero's past cruelty or vengeance rejoiced at his destruction with unaffected joy, the lower people repented of their similar demonstrations very soon after his death. Indeed their grief for Nero became so pronounced that it caused Galba as great alarm as it occasions the historian, both ancient and modern, profound contempt.[2] For this purpose we may descant upon the infinite worthlessness of the dregs of the populace at length: we may urge that they missed and mourned the shows and feasts, of which Nero had given them so bountiful a store; we may reject the evidence of Nero's popularity as worthless because found mainly among the vilest and lowest classes of the streets, among whom, we incidentally remark, Christianity found its largest number of converts. Not even those unknown hands, which for a long time after Nero's death decked his tomb each year with spring and summer flowers, shall move us from the conviction that Rome rejoiced at the bloodstained tyrant's death with righteous joy. Rome, Italy, and the Empire, were to pay for it, and in the hardest cash of countless lives, slain in twenty months of savage civil war, before another Line could be found worthy to succeed the Julian in the Principate. We, so tender in our humanity, so righteous in our indignation, so unsparing in our denunciation, cry aloud in wrath at the little stream of death, the death mainly of rebels and of traitors, which flows at bidding of a Prince turned tyrant by the traitors' baffled scheming, and we shut our eyes to the great river of sacrifice and bloody warfare, which had its sole source in that Prince's death. Our humanity has not the rare merit of consistency, since so more easily we may thrust Nero and those who mourned for him

[1] See note at end.

[2] Tacitus, and Duruy, iv. p. 97.

quick down into the nether Hell. Again, I repeat, perhaps it is as well that no final judgment, no final balancing of good and ill, is to be delivered by our wisdom and our charity.

Yet the attitude to Nero's memory of succeeding emperors proves clearly that his name was popular, and that he was regretted. Despite our Christian sentiments we really cannot help the historic fact. That Otho replaced Poppaea's statues is natural enough. But that he should replace those of her dead husband seems more inexplicable. Yet, beyond this, he recalled Nero's procurators and freedmen to their offices, he accepted the very title of "Nero" bestowed upon him "*in flattery and as the highest honour*" by the lower classes, and even, according to a Court historian, used this title in official despatches to Spain. The upper classes disliked it greatly, and Otho thus used it with great caution, but the applauding crowds in the theatre would hail him as "Nero" in their good-humour none the less. He, too, set to work to complete the Golden House, and only his early death stayed his plan of marrying Nero's widow Messalina. Vitellius climbed to power at Otho's expense, but in his professed admiration for Nero he went yet further. Solemn sacrifice was offered in the Campus Martius by the Emperor to Nero's Shade in presence of the highest priests of Rome. He applauded Nero's name, his life, his practices, his music. "Sing Us one of the Master's songs" he would say to a harpist who pleased him. Thus the mob and the Emperor joined hands in praising Nero's memory. And to them at least the Parthians must be added, who begged for due honour to be shown to his remains, and the soldiers of the valorous legion of Britain, the Fourteenth, who fought the more valiantly for Otho just because of their affection for Nero.[1]

With Vespasian's accession there was bound to come a change. The founder of a new dynasty erected on the ruins of an old, when that new dynasty is far inferior to the old in blood and in prestige, cannot either look favourably himself, nor encourage others to look favourably, upon the last Prince of the old Line. And now begins that systematic disparagement of Nero which consciously or unconsciously colours the whole of our extant records, as has been already explained. The farther, too, that the traveller recedes the darker looks the air behind him, and the historic mist has at once such obscuring and such magnifying power that the

[1] See note at end.

writers of the Flavian age devoted little care to recovering the true outlines of Nero's portrait, or considering the great background which lay behind his personal character and misdeeds. The dismal and prosaic tragedy called the "Octavia," written in the early part of Vespasian's Principate, lacks all poetic merit, and has in solitary compensation one historic interest, revealing to us how quickly Nero's character could be stereotyped as that of the blackest of all villains under the dynasty which had replaced the Julian. Otherwise the journalist of a law court could write a more moving tragedy. Martial and Statius the poets hurl at Nero's head their choicest and most abusive epithets. Domitian could in later years be loaded with no greater reproach than that of being a second Nero, a "bald-headed Nero." This was the juster retaliation, as he alone of the Flavians had sought to vindicate his predecessor's fame. Trajan's praise of Nero's early years has already been recited and justified.[1] But Trajan was in every respect a great Emperor, the greatest of the Romans since Augustus, and could steer against the current of popular opinion, which now set strongly against Nero's fame. Marcus Aurelius used him, as did Epictetus earlier, as type of the evil character. "To be violently drawn and moved by the lusts and desires of the soul," said the philosopher King, "is proper to wild beasts and monsters, such as Phalaris and Nero were." And the inferior scribblers of later generations who wrote the Emperors' lives inscribed on a permanent black-list the names of six Emperors —Caligula, Vitellius, Domitian, Commodus, Heliogabalus, and, always, Nero.[2]

Long before this, indeed very soon after Nero's death, there grew up a curious legend which remains well-nigh unique in history, the legend that Nero would return to earth again to reign. Such rare legends attach themselves usually to popular mythical heroes, such as Arthur of Britain. And it is quite possible that the Nero legend originated partly in a doubt (which prevailed widely) if the Emperor were really dead, partly in the good wishes of those who sincerely wished him alive again. Of both doubt and goodwill certain pretenders took certain and speedy advantage, proving once more the fascination of popularity which in the first century still clung round Nero's name. About the time of Otho's accession in A.D. 69, Achaea and Asia were greatly

[1] Chapter iii. [2] See note at end.

excited by the news of Nero's re-appearance. A man who was either a slave from Pontus or an Italian freedman, very like the dead Prince in face, and a skilled harpist, assumed the command of a band of freebooters, and claimed stoutly that he was Nero. This pretender was quickly suppressed on the island of Cythnos, whither a storm had driven his ship, by Calpurnius Asprenas, who was on his way to take up his duties as governor of Galatia. But twenty years later, in A.D. 88, another pretender, one Terentius Maximus, appeared in Asia, declaring that he was Nero, and had been in hiding up to then. He led away not a few of the credulous, and found hospitality and support among the Parthians. The Parthians had all but gone to war on behalf of the earlier pretender, and they welcomed the second with open arms, to the no small annoyance of the Roman Emperor.[1] Even under Trajan a writer of note can declare that it was still not clear how Nero had met with his death, "whom still even at this time all men long to be alive, and most men verily do believe at this day that Nero is still living."[2]

Long therefore before Christianity attained any power to control or mould the historical tradition, the legend was afloat that Nero was still alive, and would return to reign. The Jews, within a very few years of his death, invented oracles in prophecy of their foe's return from beyond the Euphrates, and an apocryphal writing of the second century, the "Ascension of Isaiah," declares that in the last days "Belial shall appear in the form of a man, of the King of Unrighteousness, of the matricide."

But Christianity had long since caught up and repeated the legend of Nero's return in its scripture, and there exists hardly a reasonable doubt that the legend, which was, as has been said, current in Asia at the very time, pervades the Apocalypse, written, as we hold, at the time when the first pseudo-Nero was threatening to overthrow Galba. This same legend of his return from beyond the Euphrates produced the Christian "Sibylline oracles" of the third century. An early Church tradition identified St Paul's "man of sin" and "son of perdition" and "mystery of iniquity" with the Emperor Nero; and of St Augustine's contemporaries some believed that he was still alive in the vigour of his age, others that he would rise again and come as Antichrist.

[1] See note at end.

[2] Dio Chrysostom, Orat. xxi.

Lactantius, St Chrysostom, St Jerome, and other Christian writers accept and repeat the theory that Nero is the Antichrist to come. The horrors of the first martyrdoms combined with the Nero-legend to produce the Christian tradition, and I doubt if the belief is any more dead to-day than in the eleventh century, though it cannot now as then obtain a Pope's sanction. Nero, after Judas, becomes the most accursed of the human race. "The first persecutor of the Church must needs be the last, reserved by God for a final and a more awful vengeance."

Thus Nero became a Type, the type of inconceivable wickedness and unnatural horror.

> "O heart! lose not thy nature; let not ever
> The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom;
> Let me be cruel, not unnatural,"

cries Hamlet; and to multiply examples, whether from poets or from the peasants' tales to-day in the Marches of Ancona, were needless. A taste for human flesh is perhaps the least of his mediæval iniquities. And men revenged themselves upon him in the imagination of the manner of his death and torments. To be devoured by wolves was his customary fate from the fifth century onwards, though the Devil supped off him at times, and in milder moments he was impaled. While well-nigh every fiend in Hell was kept busy at his appearing in the lower world.[1]

§ 9. Conclusion

The historian cannot so lightly distribute punishments. In the figure of mediæval legend he finds it hard to recognise the lineaments of the Roman Emperor. He discovers that Nero, though morally vicious, though in his later years tyrannical to the extent that he would show no mercy to any form of opposition, though the undoubted slayer of brother, mother, wife, and of any who could threaten his continued possession of the Imperial power, though luxurious, effeminate, undignified, and depraved, yet had for thirteen years done good service to the State, which service cannot be buried beneath an overwhelming mass of his iniquities. The earlier years of his rule had been years of justice and of mercy, of a prudent administration and a careful policy. In the

[1] See note at end.

most notable historic event of all his Principate (most notable because of most lasting influence), the growth of Christianity in Rome, its first State persecution, and the deaths of its greatest apostles, Nero indeed played alike an ignorant and a cruel part. The ignorance was that of his day and of the men of his race and city, and was not to be avoided. It is therefore excused. The cruelty was Roman cruelty, and failed miserably of its object. Both ignorance and cruelty felt inevitably convinced of their justice and of the reasonableness of the Roman hatred of the new religion. Battle was joined, and, long after Nero's time, they proved the weaker. For the rest, the Emperor had substituted lasting peace for disquiet and contempt upon the eastern frontier of his empire, by war and by wise policy. He had kept through all vicissitudes the inheritance of Britain bequeathed to him, and had added to it. He had at length bestirred the Roman arms to quell once and for all the savagery and turbulence of the Jews, and little was wanting to their conquest at his death. These tasks he placed in the hands of able subordinates whom he himself selected, who served him, their prince, loyally and well. He had devised schemes for the benefit of Rome and Italy, and planned the extension of Rome's power in the wild north-east. Within the frontiers no wars disturbed the people's peace up to the year of his death, and the rare injustice of his governors was for the most part sternly punished. His utter overthrow was caused in part by his unpopularity with the upper classes through the Empire, due to his personal tastes and Hellenic practices, in part by sheer treachery at home, in part by nationalist strivings in Gaul, and in part by that new and dangerous military restlessness and *amour propre* in the local armies, which was the inevitable result of the Augustan military system, a system which placed the Imperial armies in standing camps upon the frontiers. Until and unless the Imperial power were firmly fixed, no safeguards would prevent the perilous growth of local sensitiveness in the armies at the expense of their fidelity as soldiers of the empire. This could become a great danger for the first time only in the middle of the first century after Christ, when the armies had had time to identify themselves with their generals and their provinces. And Nero, his position already sorely weakened by unpopularity, treachery, and nationalism, fell the first victim to the new military system.

This the historian to-day learns from his study of the ancient records, records discoloured by partiality and by a still more fatal blemish, the lack of that sense of proportion in the importance of events, of which, in somewhat a different sense, the Emperor Nero stands himself justly accused. Therefore we do not conclude by insistence upon his personal iniquities and crimes. For these, doubtless, he stands answerable at history's bar of judgment, yet not for these deeds alone. The endeavour to restore the Emperor Nero from his position of terrible isolation as the Abomination of Sin upon this earth into the ranks of a common humanity may, if it so chance in the reader's judgment, not tend to the greater credit of humanity. But this is not of the historian's control. In history, as in all else, we slowly learn the great Elizabethan's lesson, that we must free ourselves from idols.

APPENDICES

A.—THE ANCIENT AUTHORITIES.

B.—CHRISTIANITY AND THE GOVERNMENT.

C.—NERO'S TITLES, ETC.

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COINS OF NERO, OCTAVIA AND POPPÆA, A.D. 57-66

1. A.D. 57: 2. A.D. 58; 3. A.D. 60; 4. A.D. 60; 5. A.D. 63; 6. A.D. 64?; 7. A.D. 65
8. HEAD OF NERO, A.D. 66; 9. DITTO, A.D. 66?; 10. DITTO, A.D. 66?;
11. HEAD OF OCTAVIA; 12. HEAD OF POPPÆA

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE ANCIENT AUTHORITIES

1. *Tacitus.*

Tacitus narrates the last part of the principate of Claudius from A.D. 47 to his death in Oct. 54 in Annals—Books xi. and xii. Books xiii.-xvi. contain the principate of Nero from his accession to the scene of the death of Thrasea in A.D. 66, where the work abruptly breaks off unfinished.

This part of Tacitus' work was written under Trajan probably about A.D. 115, and thus the question of its credibility turns largely on the sources Tacitus himself consulted. For the "personal equation" *cf.* especially *Hermann Peter*, "Die Geschichtliche Literatur über die Römische Kaiserzeit bis Theodosius I. und ihre Quellen"—8vo. Leipzig, 1897. Band ii. pp. 42-67—whose views I briefly adopt.

Tacitus' Sources:

[Chief modern works: 1. *Callegari, Ettore:* Dei Fonti per la Storia di Nerone (ap. Atti del reale Istituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere ed Arti, Serie 6. Tom. 6, pp. 1099-1136, 1397-1454; Tom. 7, pp. 153-198, 219-252: Ann. 1887-1889) —a good piece of work though the method recommended is obvious and its conclusion somewhat trite. 2. *Appelquist, Hj:* De praecipuis rerum Gai Claudii Neronis scriptoribus; Helsingforsiae; pp. 85. 3. *Fabia, Philippe:* Les Sources de Tacite dans les Histoires et les Annales. 8vo. Paris, 1893, pp. xxii. 462, with good bibliography; criticised by 4. *Boissier, Gaston*, ap. Journal des Savants—July 1895—pp. 403-413. 5. *Hardy, E. G.:* Plutarch's Lives of Galba and Otho, 12mo. London. Introd. pp. ix.-lv.]

(*a*) Primary Sources mentioned by Tacitus are:

i. Commentarii Senatus: once in xv. 74.

ii. Acta Diurna Urbis or P.R.: twice: in xiii. 31 (contemptuously), and xvi. 22.

iii. Imperial Archives: *e.g.* Letters from governors; Emperor's MS. notes, etc., alluded to xiii. 43—but not as source

of Tacitus' information; also mentioned in Histories iv. 40; Pliny, Ep. x. 95, 105; Dio. liii. 19. 2.

There is nothing to show that Tacitus made any large use of any of these three sources. iii. were probably kept secret, and we do not know if Tacitus was allowed to consult them. ii. he does not seem to rate highly. i. even if used were not very trustworthy, being always subject to Imperial revision. Pliny, Ep. vii. 33, proves that Tacitus did take some trouble, however, to consult them.

iv. Corbulo's Memoirs on the Parthian War. Mentioned expressly by elder Pliny (N. H. v. 24. 83, ii. 70. 180). Their use by Tacitus seems implied in xv. 16. If this was a direct use, the chronological and topographical deficiencies in Tacitus' account are inexcusable. Callegari (pp. 116, 117), Schiller (pp. 14, 15), and Fabia (pp. 334-337), believe he used them at second hand only.

v. Agrippina's Memoirs: mentioned iv. 53; Pliny (N. H. vii. 8. 46). It is quite unknown when these were written. Lehmann's view (pp. 5, 6) that this was at the end of Claudius' reign to attract public attention to herself and her son is perhaps more probable than the theory that she wrote them during her retirement at the end of her life. There is nothing in the later books of the Annals to suggest any use of them by Tacitus for this part of his history.

vi. Oral information: scarcely proved by the passages xii. 28. 2, xv. 73. 3. though possible. *Cf.* iii. 16.

Thus only a very scanty use of primary authorities is demonstrable.

(*b*) Secondary Sources, *i.e.* earlier historians.

These are mentioned generally by Tacitus xii. 67: 'Temporum illorum scriptores'—xiii. 17: 'plerique eorum temporum scriptores'—xiii. 20: 'nos consensum auctorum secuturi'—xiv. 2: 'ceteri quoque auctores'—xvi. 6: 'quidam scriptores.' And Tacitus expressly states his method of procedure in xiii. 20: "Nos consensum auctorum secuturi, si qui diversa prodiderint, sub nominibus ipsorum trademus." In fulfilment of this promise he mentions the names of three earlier writers—all now entirely lost to us, and probably supplanted quickly by Tacitus' own works:—

i. *Fabius Rusticus:*

Quoted xiii. 20—where it is said he "inclinat ad laudes Senecae cuius amicitia floruit"—xiv. 2, where his account is not preferred—and xv. 61. In the Agricola, c. 10, Tacitus praises his literary qualities. *Cf.* Quintilian, Inst.

Or. x. 1. 104 (probably). He was still alive in 108 A.D. His literary work probably consisted of a history of Nero's reign. There is nothing to show that it embraced Claudius' as well, or that his view of Nero was any more favourable than that of his contemporaries.

ii. *Cluvius Rufus:*

Quoted xiii. 20—where his account is preferred to Fabius'—and xiv. 2 again with a preference over Fabius'. Also twice by Plutarch (Otho 3. Quaest. Rom. 107): in the former case Tacitus is silent in the Histories as regards his statement, and Suetonius (Otho 7) repeats it as a matter of general authority 'ut quidam tradiderunt.'

Samnite by birth, and a prominent courtier under Nero, yet he never purchased his own security by Delatio. Consular at the death of Caligula, and wealthy, he managed to ingratiate himself alike with Nero, Vitellius and Galba—under whom he held office in Spain. "Equally at home in Senate and Palace." *Cf.* Tac. Histories i. 8, iv. 43. Sueton. Nero 21. Pliny, Ep. ix. 19. 5. A typical example of the possibility of the Tacitean via media in politics.

Cluvius' historical work may have begun with the accession of Claudius. There is nothing to show it went beyond the reign of Vitellius. Doubtless it was written after Nero's death, and the praise which Helvidius Priscus bestowed on the writer seems to discount the possibility that he took a favourable view of the Emperor whose stage herald he had been.

iii. *Pliny the Elder:*

Quoted xiii. 20, as agreeing with Cluvius; xv. 53, with hesitation and reluctant acceptance of his story; and almost certainly is the subject of the sneering allusion in xiii. 31.

Pliny, the bourgeois encyclopædist of Comum, of equestrian rank, perished in the eruption of Vesuvius A.D. 79, "scripsit sub Nerone novissimis annis. . . . A fine Aufidi Bassi 31 [libri]." *Cf.* Pliny, jun., Ep. iii. 5. 5. He alludes to his own history twice in the Nat. Hist. ii. 199 and 232—both allusions to omens at the end of Nero's reign. Bassus' history may have ended with the reign of Claudius. Pliny was "certainly no dependant of the Julian House," as Schiller remarks truly. (*Cf. infra.*)

That Tacitus' allusions to 'plerique scriptores,' 'consensus auctorum,' etc., imply more than these three writers is not probable. That he constantly compared their accounts for the reign of Nero throughout is not generally held. Thus he has two contradictory

accounts of the relations of Nero, Otho, and Poppæa, one in the Histories, the other in the Annals—of which the one, common also to Suetonius, Plutarch and Dio, is referred commonly to Pliny, the other, which is peculiar to Tacitus, to Cluvius. (Schiller however reverses the ascription. *Cf.* Note to chap. iv. sect. 1.) It is agreed by most critics that Tacitus employed one main authority, occasionally comparing and contrasting it with others, and that this authority for the principate of Nero was Cluvius Rufus, who certainly of the three was the most likely to have intimate acquaintance with the life of the Court—as we find it in Tacitus. So for the Histories this main authority was probably Pliny. If the much criticised "Nissen's Law" (ap. Rhein. Museum xxvi. p. 500) be taken to mean that Tacitus contented himself with embellishing and remodelling Cluvius' account, this is doubtless an exaggeration and Boissier's criticisms on Fabia are justified. It is all the more significant, therefore, that though the three authors consulted by Tacitus were men of such widely different character and station there is no hint of a difference of opinion as to Nero's personal character and behaviour in the surviving tradition. That tradition may very likely be oratorical, disproportioned, one-sided. It may always tend to take an unfavourable view of Nero. So far as it goes, there is no such reason to challenge its accuracy of statement in the case of Nero as there is in the case of Tiberius, where a contrary contemporary Tradition exists side by side with the Tacitean.

2. *Suetonius.*

C. Suetonius Tranquillus' two lives of the Emperors Claudius and Nero (ed. C. L. Roth., Leipzig, 1893) were published under Hadrian, *c.* A.D. 120. It is now generally agreed that though he may have consulted the same sources as Tacitus the two accounts are otherwise independent one of the other (so Callegari, pp. 219 *sqq.*, 1407 *sqq.*, Fabia p. 386, Schiller pp. 23-26. Only Lehmann (pp. 39-55) seems to believe Tacitus had Suetonius before him when he wrote the Annals, and his grounds are not convincing).

Suetonius collects his information with curious avidity, probably from many sources. He is unblushingly uncritical. Mere suggestions become in his hands certain facts, and solitary instances general assertions of an all-embracing character, "genera exemplaria." (*Cf.* Nero 36 with Ann. xv. 68, Nero 27 with xv. 37.) There is no attempt at a chronological arrangement; only a rough and ready division of an Emperor's career into "Virtues" and "Vices." Of insatiate curiosity and professedly but a biographer, with however the lost merit of brevity, he revels in the trivial details of daily life and neglects larger outlooks. His attitude to the early Principate is the typical "Senatorial" one of the Flavian age. (*Cf.* Calig. 26,

Nero 37, 41, 43, etc.). He is useful as supplementing Tacitus and at times for purposes of comparison. His lack of proportion is still more marked.

Cf. especially H. Peter, *op. cit.* I. c. 3. II. pp. 67-73, 326-337. Philemon Holland's translation is delightful.

3. *Dio Cassius.*

Dio Cassius of Nicæa wrote in Greek a Complete Roman History as far as the year A.D. 229. He was consul in A.D. 222 and died *c.* 235 A.D.

His history was abridged in XI. century by Xiphilinus, and another epitome of it published in XII. century by Zonaras, who went partly to the original, partly to Xiphilinus. Excerpts also were made in X. century for Constantine VII.

The present remains of his eighty Books are thus representative of very various sources. Bks. i -xxi. we have only in Zonaras' epitome and the Const. excerpts; xxii.-xxxv. in Const. excerpts; xxxvi.-lx. are preserved entire; also in Xiph., also (xliv.-lx.) in Zonaras; lxi.-lxxx. in both Xiph. and Zonaras—save lxx., lxxi., which are lost altogether. For lxxviii., lxxix. the mutilated original exists also. But Zonaras for lxviii.-lxxx. goes to Xiph. rather than to the original.

The principate of Claudius and Nero is comprised in Books lx.-lxiii. Thus for Nero's reign we have the independent abridgments of Xiphilinus and Zonaras, and occasional help from that of Joannes Antiochenus. The three versions are at times perplexingly at variance—*e.g.* on the Revolt of Vindex—and the reconstruction of the original Dio is wellnigh impossible. Hence too Dio's relation to Tacitus and Suetonius remains matter of much diversity of opinion. That he employed Suetonius is asserted, *e.g.*, by Hardy and denied by Schwartz (ap. Pauly, Real. Enc. iii. pp. 1714-1719) and Callegari. That he made direct use of Tacitus is maintained by Fabia and Hardy, denied at great length by Schiller (pp. 29-40), and by Schwartz, Callegari, and Appelquist. Callegari believes he represents Pliny in his account of Nero, and thus a comparison of his account with the Tacitus = Cluvius story becomes of greater interest. The truth of Peter's remark (ii. p. 269) that "in comparing Xiphilinus (or Zonaras) with Tacitus and Suetonius we move on very uncertain ground" is undeniable. Where Tacitus' narrative fails us altogether Dio's becomes indispensable. Where the two exist side by side they are perhaps best treated as independent versions derived at least in part from the same authorities. His repetition of a statement in Suetonius must not be taken as additional evidence for that statement.

In his attitude to Senate and Princeps there is the same Senatorial point of view, now strongly marked—though he is of

course no Republican. The theory of the Dyarchy finds warm appreciation. The army, therefore, and every Princeps whose power is professedly based on military support rather than on Senatorial approval he handles roughly. Hence, *e.g.*, his praise of Verginius Rufus. Thus, whether based on Tacitus or not, his account shows that "the history of the Julio-Claudian line preserves the colours stamped upon it by Tacitus and Suetonius unchanged for a century." (Peter.)

His harsh treatment of Seneca is peculiar to Dio. The materials for his adverse judgment were mainly to hand in Tacitus, but their appropriation and repetition as facts must be due to the writer's own opinion, which as Schwartz suggests may be due to his personal dislike of Stoicism and its representatives. This depreciation of Seneca is the more curious as it harmonises ill with the 'Senatorial' tone of his narrative in general. The speeches inserted are mere rhetorical twaddle of his own invention.

By far the best edition of Dio and a very fine piece of critical work is that of U. P. Boissevain, 8vo, Berolini, 1901. The editor's amusing local patriotism is happily expressed in and confined to the preface.

Cf. especially Schwartz, *op. cit.*, and Peter, *op. cit.* ii. 84-101.

4. *Other Writers.*

Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio exhaust the list of writers directly upon Nero, as Plutarch's life of Nero is lost. Material, however, of varying interest, importance, and amount, is to be derived from the following writers:

Seneca: passim. *Cf.* too the "bibliography" F. (p. 506). His tragedies, of course, are still more valueless for contemporary history than as dramatic poetry.

"*The Octavia*":

[Chief modern works, editions, etc.:

1. *Ladek, F.:* De Octavia Praetexta, ap. Dissertationes Philologae Vindobonenses, vol. iii. pp. 1-107, 1891. 2. *Nordmeyer, G.:* De Octaviae fabula, 8°, Lipsiae, 1892, pp. 66. 3. *Hosius, C.:* Lucanus und Seneca, ap. Jahrbücher für Classische Philologie, 1892, pp. 355-6. 4. *Stahr, Adolph:* 'Agrippina.' 8°, Berlin, 1867, pp. 271-303—of less value. 5. *Leo:* Senecae Tragoediae, i. pp. 1 and 101.]

This solitary example preserved to us of a Fabula praetexta was once ascribed to Seneca, but this view is no longer held and cannot be. There is, *e.g.*, a clear reference in v. 629-631 to Nero's death. Braun's old theory that it is a work of the early Renaissance has likewise perished under Ladek's analysis. The two views which now hold the field are that it was composed (*a*) very soon after

Nero's death, under Vespasian; (*b*) under Domitian. (*a*) championed by Hosius and Ladek, urges resemblances to the Pharsalia up to, but not beyond bk. vii., which Petronius knew already in 66 A.D.; imitations of Seneca in language and rhetorical style; and its being suited to a time when men's hate of Nero was lively; (*b*) has nothing in particular to be said for it—despite Nordmeyer; (*a*) is probable. As author, Stahr suggested Curiatius Maternus — who wrote Praetextae in Flavian times, and Hosius accepts the idea. Ladek and Nordmeyer regard it as a question to which no answer can be given. So far as certainty goes, this is of course the case. It is generally agreed that the play shows no signs of any acquaintance with Tacitus.

Pliny the Elder:

Of all his voluminous writings, only the Naturalis Historia in thirty-seven books published in 77 A.D. is preserved. The three references here to Nero in person, vii. 45-46; xxii. 92 (ed. Sillig. 1851), characterise him as the fax humani generis, hostis generis humani (like the early Christians) and the poison of the earth. They are significant of the view he must have taken in his lost history.

Josephus:

Indispensable of course for the history of Judæa under Nero, *q.v.* Other reff. ap. Antiq. xx. 8; B. Jud. ii. 13; iv. 9, add nothing to our other sources, save for his allusion to the "many historians" of Nero, "some careless of the truth by reason of the benefits they received at his hands, others who for hatred so impudently raved against him with their lies, that they themselves are worthy of condemnation" (Antiq. xx. 8. 3)—an annoying statement of which we have no confirmation. For the former class, if it ever existed, save to point Josephus' antithesis, has perished without another hint of their existence. And if in the second class we include Pliny, Fabius, and Cluvius, the language seems strong: if not, who are the unknown? The passage is historically of very little use. For the rest it cannot be said that Josephus treats Nero with any great approbation.

Plutarch:

Life of Galba, indispensable for the end of Nero's reign. Allusions of some interest also in Lives of Otho, Antonius (c. 87, p. 955), and Flamininus (c. 12, p. 376). His life of Nero is unhappily lost. (*Cf.* Vit. Galb. c. 2, and Lamprias' Catalogue.)

Martial:

As the client of Seneca and Lucan, and living in Rome under Nero, his allusions are disappointingly scanty; *e.g.* to Nero's Thermae (vii. 34; x. 48); on Lucan's birthday

(vii. 21; *cf.* xiv. 194). Thus Nero escapes lightly with the "Nero crudelis, nullaque invisior umbra" (vii. 21). Perhaps Domitian, the 'portio Neronis de crudelitate,' as Tertullian calls him, looked unfavourably on such attacks.

Statius:

Martial's contemporary. Two poems in the Silvae—written after A.D. 92—are of some use, viz.: ii. 7, Genethliacon Lucani, and iii. 3, Consolatio ad Claudium Etruscum.

Besides the above *Lucan*, *Persius*, and *Petronius*, especially the last named, are of the greatest interest for the historian of Nero, and are treated at length elsewhere. *Juvenal*, *Pausanias*, *Dio Chrysostom* (Or. xxi., xxxi., xxxii.), *Pliny the younger*, *Polyaenus* (Strategica viii. 62), the *Scriptores historiae Augustae*, *Frontinus* (Strateg. and De Aqueductibus), and the *Oracula Sibyllina* are of occasional service. *Philostratus'* biography of Apollonius of Tyana is of very curious interest, and though written at the beginning of the third century, yet, if his information goes back to the mage's own letters and his friend Damis of Niniveh, perhaps Schiller (p. 44) under-rates the work. *Eutropius*, Brev. vii. 14, 15, c. 375 A.D., is the basis for *Orosius'* (*c.* 410 A.D) amusing Christianisation of a bald epitome. The string of epithets devoted by Orosius to Nero is worthy of Cicero's anti-Catilinarian fury, and fulfilled, let us hope, S. Augustine's intentions (*cf.* vii. 7; vii. 27). His somewhat over-coloured account of Nero's reign certainly would convince a Christian audience that their own century enjoyed no monopoly of misfortunes.

The *Christian writers* and their evidence will be found discussed elsewhere (*cf.* Appendix B). Apart from the relations of the Church to the Empire in the first century, such writers, *e.g.*, as Tertullian, Lactantius, S. Augustine, S. Ambrose, S. Jerome, etc., etc., are of no historical use in their comments on Nero.

APPENDIX B

CHRISTIANITY AND THE GOVERNMENT, ETC.

A.—The Ancient Authorities.

Tacitus: Ann. xv. 44: "Ergo abolendo rumori Nero subdidit reos et quaesitissimis poenis adfecit, quos per flagitia invisos vulgus Christianos appellabat. Auctor nominis eius Christus Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio adfectus erat; repressaque in praesens exitiabilis superstitio rursum erumpebat, non modo per Judaeam, originem eius mali, sed per urbem etiam, quo cuncta undique atrocia aut pudenda confluunt celebranturque.

Igitur primum correpti qui fatebantur, deinde indicio eorum multitudo ingens haud proinde in crimine incendii quam odio humani generis convicti (MS. Med. 'conjuncti') sunt."

No passage in any ancient writer has had more written both well and foolishly concerning it than this. I notice very briefly a few of the more important points raised about it, but omit the minor or more foolish. For modern authors' works, here alluded to by names only, *cf.* General Bibliography, J, pp. 508-509 *infra*.

(1) *Genuineness:* Hochart suggests it a forgery, perhaps of Monte Cassino monastery. His arguments are worthless and need no consideration. Neither is the passage flattering to the Christians.

(2) *Quos . . . appellabat:* For Tac. 'exitiabilis superstitio' *cf.* Suetonius' 'Superstitio nova ac malefica'; Pliny's 'Superstitio prava et immodica'; Minuc. Felix., Oct. 9, etc. 'Flagitia,' similarly used by Livy 39. 16, of Bacchanalian conspirators. There is no reason for doubting this reputation of the early Christians, however mistaken a one. Christian evidence shows the name a term of reproach, *e.g.* Acts xxvi. 28, *cf.* xxviii. 22; 1 Ep. Peter iv. 16; Epist. Hebrews x. 33. Nor is there any reason for supposing it an anachronism from their reputation in Tacitus' own day, as Arnold, p. 55. The name first given in Antioch, *c.* 45 A.D., Acts xi. 26. Hence in twenty years it could very easily reach Rome.

(3) *Correpti:* not in Tac. = 'arrested,' but 'denounced' is the best English equivalent; "put upon their trial," ap. Hardy, p. 65.

(4) *Qui fatebantur:* Two rival theories regarding the "confession"—(*a*) = "That they were Christians" is the view of Aubé, Boissier, Keim, Bury, Merivale, Farrar, Furneaux, Raabe, Renan, Batiffol, Hardy, Ramsay; (*b*) = "Their guilt," *i.e.* Incendiarism, is the view of the minority, viz. Arnold (vigorously), Duruy, Schiller. The Latin, *e.g.* 'in crimine incendii' and 'fateri' which does *not* = 'profiteri,' is strongly in favour of (*b*). Its only difficulty is improbability of confession of incendiarism by those who were *not* guilty. For the fire was due to chance, not to incendiaries. See note to chap. vii. § 2. Tacitus expressly exonerates them from actual guilt, and this is besides very probable. Hence Duruy's suggestion that they confessed under torture to a crime of which they were innocent. I hold the Latin fatal to (*a*) and that (*b*) only is possible. No preconceptions must mislead us here. But we must note, what is usually unnoticed altogether, viz., that *the confession precedes the denunciation not vice versâ*. Hence I take it that the accusers really believed the Christians were the authors of the fire, and the basis of this erroneous belief was the

Christian fiery language *re* the coming of the Day of Judgment, which was then daily expected. *Cf.* Apoc. *passim*, 2 Ep. Pet. iii. 7-13, Orac. Sibyllina iv. 172 (*c.* 75 A.D.) Renan, pp. 154, 155. For the other question whether those who confessed were really Christians see below. Here I anticipate my conclusion on the question, *q.v.* But in any case the confession must be of incendiarism, not rightly believed (because the fire was the result of chance) but through a misunderstanding, which may however very well have been honestly believed both by the mob and by Nero.

(5) *Indicio eorum:* Again anticipating the conclusion that the first denounced were genuine Christians, how, it is asked, could they denounce a vast number of their brethren? Possible answers are (*a*) They turned traitors or renegades to save their own lives, *cf.* Ep. Hebrews vi. 4-6; (*b*) They were religious enthusiasts carried away by their fervour, akin to the later Zealots after martyrdom who gave occasion for the stern censures of the Fathers and for Gibbon's clever sneers; (*c*) They implicated others unwillingly under torture, as Aubé and Renan from Sulpic. Severus ii. p. 96, (but S. crudelissimae quaestiones only = Tac. quaes. poenis, and does not prove the torture to extort information), or by foolish admissions on cross-examination, etc., as, *e.g.*, Ramsay. The three modern suggestions are not of course mutually exclusive, and as a "great number" were as a result implicated, we may if we like adopt all of them, especially as the implication was *not* in the original charge of incendiarism but only in the mere fact of Christianity. And no one up to the moment of sentence could tell whether a light or a terrible punishment would be inflicted, though the latter of course might seem more probable. I cannot, however, accept the suggestion, ap. Hardy, p. 68, that there were contending parties in the Church and one seized the opportunity of denouncing the other.

(6) *Multitudo ingens:* It is a plain statement. I see no reason for holding it an anachronism or denying it. Exaggeration of course there may be, and Gibbon, c. 15, p. 61, well compares Livy's "multitudinem ingentem, alterum iam prope populum"—39. 13, 14—of the Bacchanalian conspirators who turned out not to exceed 7000. But with this reservation the words may be added to our other evidence as regards the extent of Christianity in Rome (see below), and derive support from, as they lend support to, that other evidence, *q.v.*

(7) *Odio humani generis:* Two views: (*a*) "Hatred they felt for the human race"—taken *e.g.* by Gibbon, who suggests

"a precept of the Gospel," viz., St Luke xiv. 26, as "perhaps the innocent occasion of the popular error," Arnold, Lightfoot, Bury, and most. (*b*) "Hatred the human race felt for them," taken by Cuq, Duruy, Allard. But a dative is more natural in (*b*) of person to whom they are objects of odium. And *cf.* Tac. Hist. v. 5. 2. where the Jews are charged with 'adversus omnes alios hostile odium.' Hence I decidedly prefer (*a*). Though of course the 'human race' retaliated on its own account with answering hate. But this is not the sense of these three words. Cuq's counter argument has too many gaps in it.

It seems to me quite impossible to take 'Odium' as either a formal charge in law by itself, or as a literary phrase implying, *e.g.*, such a formal charge as that of magic. I cannot follow Cuq, Ramsay, Arnold, in such views. Zeller argues that there is no necessary association of magic with the odium, and probably. But in any case I take it Tacitus gives us the cause, but *not* the formal ground of the condemnation in his vague expression; *cf.* Sanday and below.

(8) *Convicti:* The MS. Med. ii. is indubitably conjuncti, and "convicti verbessern alle," says Arnold. Boissier, Ramsay, and Cuq, however, keep conjuncti, and I see no good reason for the alteration. That Tacitus, however, uses it in the strict juristic sense of a 'combined accusation, where two crimes are included' (as Cuq), I cannot hold. Tacitus' language throughout is vague and literary rather than precise and legal; and Cuq argues back too much from the punishment to the accusation. I take it to mean "were associated with them not in the charge of incendiarism but in the accusation of hatred (if not simply—'by reason of their hatred'), etc." Ramsay's 'were involved in their fate' leaves rather too much to be understood.

(9) *Quamquam adversus sontes*—§ 8— 'Sontes' is obviously not Tacitus' own opinion, which would involve him in inexcusable self-contradiction, but is the popular opinion of those who yet felt the miseratio. So Arnold rightly as, *e.g.*, against Schiller.

For other points in this chapter of Tacitus, see note to chapter vii. § 5.

Suetonius: 'Claudius,' 25: Judaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit. 'Nero,' 16: Afflicti suppliciis Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novae ac maleficae.

Various views are held on the first passage (*a*) That 'Chrestus' was a name of an actual false Messiah turbulent in Judaea as a result of Caligula's action; (*b*) that the

name was a watchword (as = any Messiah) of the disturbers of the peace in Rome; (*c*) that Chrestus = Christ, and the writer speaks of him as active in Rome under Claudius either (i) through his own ignorance or (ii) through that of his authorities, which he did not take the trouble to correct, though, as he wrote under Hadrian, he cannot have shared their error, which is "perhaps a report sent in to the Emperor by the magistrate charged with care for the order in Rome." Merivale wavers between (*a*) and (*b*). Keim and Allard take *c* (i); Boissier ii. p. 68 *c* (ii). I must hold (*c*) certainly preferable to (*a*) and (*b*), *i.e.* the preaching by the Christians had already begun in Rome under Claudius. And *cf.* St Paul, Epist. Rom., A.D. 58 or 59, already proving a Christian Church in that city. There is no evidence that the Jews in Rome applied the name of Christ to any Jewish Messiah, true or false.

The second passage is cited by Suetonius in Nero's praise. He fails entirely to connect the persecution with the Fire, which he holds Nero to have originated, but makes it one of a series of mere police regulations for the better order and behaviour of the city. This is very significant with reference to modern controversies. *Cf.* below.

Coming next to the Christian evidence, I can here state only very briefly the view as to the date of the various New Testament documents which here concern us which seems to me most probable. For this purpose, of course, and throughout this entire chapter, I see no reason to approach the Christian writers from any different standpoint of criticism to that which I use always in dealing with the classical. For historical use both must be treated in precisely the same way. As regards facts narrated, no question of inspiration can be permitted here to concern us in the least.

St Peter. First Epist.: Internal evidence shows this to be a catholic epistle addressed to Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, written from 'Babylon,' *i.e.* indubitably Rome. The whole letter harps on the insecurity of the Christians in view of the dislike felt for them by the 'Gentiles.' They are spoken of as 'evil-doers.' They are afflicted by 'manifold temptations.' They suffer a 'fiery trial' (which, of course, may easily be metaphorical). They are, however, not to give cause for any complaint against them other than their creed. They are to be loyal to the Emperor and to the provincial governors. If they must suffer they are to suffer only as and for the name of Christians, "Εἰ δὲ ὡς χριστιανὸς μὴ αἰσχυνεσθώ." *Cf.* "οἱ ἐπηρεάζοντες ὑμῶν τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐν χριστῷ ἀναστροφήν." Their suffering is "common to the brotherhood in the world." They must endure for a

little, and their sufferings will be short, as the end of all things is at hand. *Cf* 1. 6; 2. 12-17; 3. 14-16; 4. 4, 7, 12-16; 5. 8. 9. The Epistle also shows an acquaintance, according to Lightfoot (Ep. Clem. ii. 498-9), with St Paul's Epist. to Ephesians = A.D. 63 or A.D. 62 (Hort), as well as to Romans = A.D. 58 (or A.D. 59, Keim). Hence Lightfoot, Hort (in his edition of the Epistle, London, 1898), and Renan ascribe it to the persecution of 64—and the summer of the year.

Ramsay's counter arguments (pp. 279-295) placing it *c.* A.D. 75-80 are to me unconvincing. He seems, perhaps, a little inclined to maintain a theory first and then date a piece of evidence by the theory, instead of testing the theory independently by the evidence. That St Peter ordained Clement, too, is shown by Erbes to be a doubtful tradition. The only good argument against the A.D. 64 date is the possibility of Christianity spreading N. of Taurus by that year. But even, *e.g.*, if one accepts fully Ramsay's "South Galatian" theory for St Paul, there remains a period in St Peter's life, *c.* A.D. 42-51, when he vanishes completely from view—going εἰς ἕτερον τόπον (Acts xii. 17). If subsequently he is found writing to these districts, I see no objection to the view that he may have visited them during these ten years. In any case, that Christianity during the thirty odd years since Christ's crucifixion could win occasional adherents (ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς) in these districts seems to me in every respect possible.

I take it as the better view that the epistle was written in A.D. 64—and Christians therefore through the Empire could suffer either as malefactors or simply for the 'name'—this implying evil deeds in the eyes of the magistrates by itself. From the probable date of the letter we argue to the ground of condemnation, and not *vice versâ*.

The Apocalypse: The interpretation of this is a notoriously difficult problem and can never be certain in all its points. Renan's—c. 16. 17—is a splendid contribution. The difficulty is largely due to the necessity of distinguishing between the part of the seer's visions based on past or present events (which certainly is a very large part) and the part which is only an imagination of future. Further his actual knowledge has local limitations, the full effect of which we cannot estimate. And the change in metaphors—*e.g.* cc. 13 and 17—leads to repetitions and the probability of some identifications, which however increase like uncertainties. There is also a comparison of the visions with Daniel c. 7, which as itself interpreted by the 'Epistle of Barnabas' c. 4.—*c.* A.D.

70-79—is capable of various constructions and has received them from, *e.g.*, Weizsäcker, Lightfoot, and Ramsay. Much must remain doubtful. Certain facts and interpretations however seem to me very probable. I quote a few.

(1) The work is full of allusions to a persecution of the Christians as Christians, and especially for refusing to 'worship the Beast' (*i.e.* in this connection the Emperor) = dissenters from Caesar-worship. Their fate is especially associated with the city of Rome. Some of the victims were 'beheaded,' 20. 4. There is no mention of burning. The Fornication = this worship. The name of blasphemy = σεβαστός. But Church and Empire are represented in bitter and never-ceasing hostility and war. *Cf.* 6. 9-11; 7. 14; 12. 11, 17; 13. 7; 16. 6; 17. 6; 18. 24; 19. 2; 20. 4. The question arising is—Is this the Neronian persecution?

(2) Rome = the Beast of 13 and the courtesan of 17. The Beast is also confused with its 'Wounded-head,' *cf.* 13. 3, 12; 17. 8. This indubitably = Nero—"the legend of whose healing and return to reign was in everyone's mouth." For this Nero-legend, on which the structure of the whole work is certainly largely based, see chapter xi. sect. 8, and Note, *ad loc.* But there were two pseudo-Neros, one of the end of A.D. 68 to Jan. 69, one of A.D. 88. *Both* anticipated help from Parthia and not the second only (as Mommsen). *Cf.* Tac. Hist. i. 2. The 'number of the Beast' is now fairly generally admitted to be 666 because this = Νερων καισαρ transliterated into Hebrew. And Irenaeus' variant 616 = the Latin Nero Caesar so transliterated instead of the Greek, which is most striking confirmation. If we once reject this, we leave it an unsolved riddle. The second Beast = the false prophet = Simon Magus possibly or ? the Asiarch (as Salmon). The seven heads of cc. 13 and 17 of course = the seven hills of Rome. The ten horns = the provincial governors—whose power is excellently described in 17. 12, 13. The number *may* be derived from Daniel. In any case it is a round number and the Seer did not go round counting the number of the Roman provinces.

(3) The End is to come soon. This as seen is also St Peter's opinion. The three and a half years so often repeated reappears in Daniel and probably cannot be taken literally. In any case it is part of a future prophecy and has nothing to do with past events. *Cf.* 11. 2, 3; 12. 6, 12; 16. 14 *sq.*; 22. 10, 12, 20.

Thus (1) and (3) recall forcibly the First Epistle of St Peter.

There are two main theories: (*a*) "The work is the immediate result of the persecution of A.D. 64 and its echoes in Asia": the

view, *e.g.*, of Renan, Aubé, Keim. (*b*) It has no particular reference to the Neronian persecution but was written much later as a manifesto against Caesar-worship in general, either under Vespasian (Mommsen) or Domitian (Neumann, Arnold, Ramsay). If we accept (*a*) it is to be dated with great precision in the last months of A.D. 68 when Galba was Emperor. For myself I subscribe to (*a*) and must reject (*b*).

Certain arguments suit either Theory, *e.g.*:

(1) Nero's return is anticipated. Now a pretender appears under Galba, and another later. But the Galba pretender specially troubles Asia and Achaea—and this suits (*a*) rather better.

(2) A Parthian invasion is expected to restore him, 9. 14 *sq.*; 16. 12. This suits both. *Cf.* Tac. Hist. i. 2. for the earlier (as against Mommsen).

(3) The verses 17. 10, 11 can be differently explained. Almost certainly Caesar is *not* the first, but Augustus, so we have "five fallen," "one is," "one is not yet come and is to continue a short space," and "the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth and is of the seven" (certainly = Nero, *cf.* 13. 3; 17. 8). The list then is, on the two rival theories,

(*a*) Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero = the five. Galba = he who is; Galba's successor (naturally unknown ex hyp.) = the one to come, but he can only last a short time because the end is fast approaching, and besides the pseudo-Nero is already active. Nero again = the eighth.

(*b*) Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero = the five. Vespasian = he who is. His successor is undefined because "the writer did not like to say the reigning Emperor would be overthrown." Nero again = the eighth.

For the Domitian theory I fail to see any possibility of a satisfactory list at all. Even the Vespasian theory has to omit "Galba, Otho, and Vitellius" as of course 'not belonging to the series.' I fail to see why they should not be counted however, especially Galba. The question why the pseudo-Nero should not succeed the reigning Emperor at once without the intermediary successor is common to both theories. On the whole (*a*) is the better list, but (*b*) is possible. I fail to see why we should not attempt to make some satisfactory list.

On the other hand certain arguments strongly favour (*a*), viz.:

(4) There is no mention of the destruction of Jerusalem. But the Gentiles are to possess the outer court only, 11. 2. and ? 20. 9. The latter is a prophecy, but the seer knows danger is threatening. This suits the position of affairs in Judaea in A.D. 68 admirably. Mommsen's argument that the passage

has nothing to do with the actual state of the city is forced and does not appeal to me.

(5) 17. 16, 17, clearly imply civil war in the Empire. The prophecy has an excellent basis of probability in the general outlook at the end of A.D. 68, but no such basis at all under Vespasian or Domitian.

(6) The Burning of Rome—18. 8 *sqq.*—is doubtless a prophecy. Yet it can on (*a*) be based on the exaggerated reports of the *recent* Great Fire of Rome which reached Asia. On (*b*) it has no recent event or likelihood to support it. On (*a*) it cannot refer to the burning of the Capitol by the Vitellians in Dec. 69, as the pseudo-Nero was then long since dead and the prophecy somewhat discredited for the time.

The arguments in favour of (*b*) are nothing like so strong.

(7) The great crime is 'Cæsar-worship.' This of course suits Domitian. But *from the other evidence* it suits Nero as well—when the Christians suffered as Christians. The Christian writer interprets the 'Odium' of Tacitus, etc. And Cæsar-worship, *e.g.* at Pergamum, is just as prominent to a local writer under Nero as later. Here again Ramsay argues from his theory to the date of the document, and not *vice versâ*, and I cannot follow him in this, while his view that the apostles for the most part tried to keep the peace between Church and State, whereas the Apocalypse declares war, is true up to the Neronian persecution (*cf.* 1st Ep. Peter) but *not* after it; at least there is no evidence for the view and every probability is against it. And (*a*) dates the Apocalypse four years later. I fail to see any anachronism in attributing "the spirit of the Scottish Cameronians" to the author in Dec. A.D. 68.

(8) Irenaeus, the earliest extant authority, dates the work under Domitian. His date, however, is *c.* 180 A.D., and if the Apocalypse enjoyed strange vicissitudes of neglect and esteem immediately after Irenaeus, as with Caius, Hippolytus, and the author of the Muratorian fragment, it not improbably did before, especially when years passed by and the prophecies in their immediate sense might seem not to be fulfilled. Irenaeus' testimony to its authorship is perhaps more valuable than that to its date. He abandons the task of interpretation in despair and with it the internal evidence which here on the question of date is more valuable than one piece of external evidence, not "a generation" only later but a century.

Lastly (9) the insistence on the City of Rome as the place of persecution, *e.g.* 17. 6; 18. 24, is difficult to reconcile with (*b*)'s theory of a standing protest against Cæsar-worship with a reference, if to any particular place at all, to Pergamum

and not to Rome. Mommsen's explanation is so thoroughly demolished by Furneaux, p. 578, that I do not repeat the proof of its unsatisfactoriness. Thus again (*a*) receives a support denied to (*b*).

Throughout this discussion I have had no wish to incur, *e.g.*, such reproaches as Salmon's on the score of 'assurance,' 'scepticism,' and the like. But the historian cannot, like the theologian, leave the question undecided as to the *probable* date of a document which he is compelled to use, and must give his reasons even in so fierce and unpromising a controversy. I propose therefore to use the Apocalypse as a work of the end of the year 68 A.D. and as produced largely by the Neronian persecution, for the reasons as now explained. I claim no conviction for any but myself in the matter, unless the reasons seem valid, and necessarily admit that many matters remain unexplained. If I have affronted prophecy by supposing it to be based on, or at least largely influenced by, and reproductive of, the circumstances of the prophet's day, I cannot help it. I can but hope that all may not regard this, which appears to a historian as a gain, as an affront. If the expectations of the writer were not fulfilled, it seems to the historian to tend to the writer's credit to prove them at least very reasonable, credible, intelligible and not unintelligible. The question of authorship does not here concern the historical discussion at all.

Epistle to Hebrews: Views on this are many: *e.g.* (*a*) it is by Barnabas, *c.* A.D. 66, to the Church at Rome and the title is a misnomer, according to Renan, ingeniously: (*b*) Holtzmann = to Roman Jews, (*c*) according to Hort, to Palestinian Jews, (*d*) according to Keim 'to Alexandrian Jews, and by Apollos,' etc., etc. Chapters 10 and 13 undoubtedly refer to some persecution of the Christians addressed, and of their 'leaders,' who had passed away, *cf.* 12. 23. '*Ὀνειδισμοῖς τε καὶ θλίψεσι θεατριζόμενοι*,' 10. 33, has been taken to refer to the scenic representations given by the victims, according to St Clement, and if the Church addressed be the Roman, this suits well enough. See above, note to c. vii. § 5. But if the Church be the Palestinian this is impossible, and the *θεατριζόμενοι* must be used metaphorically only. Hence Lightfoot ad Ep. Clem. 6. 1 rejects Renan's view, which, however, is still attractive. But in the great uncertainty attaching to the epistle it is of no additional use for our purpose.

St Clement, Epist. I. Corinth. § 1-6, alludes to the deaths of St Peter and St Paul, and continues in a passage already discussed. See chapter vii. § 5, note. The "*διὰ ζῆλος*" is as easily explained by the popular hatred of the Christians as, *e.g.*, by envy of them on the part of the Jews. Date A.D. 95-6.

Hermas. '*Pastor*': Vis. iii. 1, 2 (date probably 2nd century init.) is taken by Renan to refer to the persecution of A.D. 64. The Christians, in the passage, have suffered, 'ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ,' viz., μάστιγας, φυλακάς, θλίψεις μεγάλας, σταύρους, θηρία ἕνεκα τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ θεοῦ. The description suits the Neronian persecution certainly better than that of Domitian as this is described to us. In view of the writer's date it is not conclusive in any way to prove that the Neronian victims suffered 'for the name.' But this being probable on the other evidence (*cf. supra*), there is no obstacle in the way of applying the passage to the persecution of A.D. 64 as well as to the later one.

Melito. Bp. of Sardis, c. A.D. 170—to Marcus Aurelius, ap. Euseb. H. E. iv. 26, is the first Christian writer to mention Nero as persecutor *by name.* "Μόνοι πάντων ἀναπεισθέντες ὑπό τινων βασκάνων ἀνθρώπων τὸν καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐν διαβολῇ καταστῆσαι λόγον ἠθέλησαν Νέρων καὶ Δομετιανός. The βάσκανοι ἄνθρωποι cannot be identified precisely. There is *per se* no reason to suppose them Jews any more than pagans who detested the Christians for their supposed crimes.

Later Evidence: This need not detain us as it adds nothing at great length, *e.g.* Sulpicius Severus, A.D. 380, Chron. ii. 28, 29 (interesting however for the light thrown on the Tacitus text. The 'Datae leges' and 'Edicta' forbidding a man to be a Christian are placed vaguely 'after' the first Neronian persecution). Tertullian: *c.* A.D. 200, Apol. 5; Adv. Gnos. Scorp. 15; Lactantius, De Mort. Persec. 2 (who speaks of a great number becoming Christians not only at Rome but 'everywhere daily,' and, at length, of the belief as to Nero's return as Antichrist); Eusebius, H. E. ii. 25; St Jerome, De Vir. iii. 5; mention the persecution with special reference to the deaths of St Peter and St Paul and the legend of Simon Magus. These do not connect it with the Fire, as Sulpicius, following Tacitus, of course does. The spurious Seneca Letter 12 to St Paul says "Christiani et Judaei quasi machinatores incendii affecti supplicio uri solent." But this is absolutely worthless evidence (*cf. supra*, chapter 8, § 4, note), despite its addition of the 'Jews' to the victims. *Cf.* below B (2). Seneca's own entire silence on Christianity has been declared 'calculated,' *e.g.* by Fleury ii. p. 64 following St Augustine, De Civ. Dei vi. 11. "Christianos tamen iam tunc Judaeis inimicissimos in neutram partem commemorare ausus est, ne vel laudaret contra suae patriae veterem consuetudinem vel reprehenderet contra propriam forsitan voluntatem." Despite, *e.g.*, Champagny iv. 264-266, this seems improbable. If Seneca ever heard of the Chris-

tians, as he probably did, if not from Gallio, yet as a result of the fire, he probably thought their new superstition too contemptible to be worth mentioning. *Cf.* Lightfoot, 'Philippians' *loc. cit.* and Boissier. Kreyher would have us think that Seneca had Christian slaves from Epist. 24, and that St Luke's Theophilus may be Seneca himself, etc., etc. Hasenclever is sensible.

B.—The Persecution of A.D. 64:

The four modern theories on this can now be briefly dismissed.

(1) The sufferers were not Christians but Jews, viz., The Zealot followers of Judas the Gaulonite. The confusion between the two sects was natural and the Jews were already unpopular with the Government. Whereas the Christians were insignificant. So Gibbon—c. 16. pp. 88, 89.

The entire evidence contradicts this view, and in every particular. *Cf.* for the distinction between the two sects as early as A.D. 71, Tac. Hist. v. ed. Halm. frag. 2, p. 218, ap. Sulp. Sev. Chron. ii. 30. 6-8. There is no Jewish mention of any such persecution, *e.g.* ap. Josephus. *Cf. e.g.* criticisms on the view by Arnold 31-32, Bury *ad. loc.* Lightfoot, 'Philippians,' p. 25 *sq.*; Hardy § 4; etc., etc. It is impossible.

(2) They were first Jews, who dragged the Christians, whom they hated, into the same condemnation. So Merivale's refinement on Gibbon, using similar arguments of the unobtrusiveness and innocence of the early Christians.

The only evidence for the view is the spurious 'Seneca,' Epist. 12 to St Paul. Against it are the same arguments as against Gibbon. We cannot fly in the face of all our ancient evidence which, whether non-Christian or Christian, depicts the Christians as the sufferers. Merivale interprets the Suetonius' Chrestus passage erroneously (probably).

(3) The Jews were first accused, but they managed, largely through Poppæa's influence, to shift the blame on to the Christians, who therefore were the only sufferers. So Allard, Renan, Lightfoot (Ap. F. ii. 1. 10). Renan, however, makes also other suggestions and wavers between the Jews, Tigellinus and Nero, as sole cause of the selection of the Christians as the piaculum for the fire.

There is no good evidence for this theory. St Clement's Διὰ ζῆλος and Melito's ὑπό τινων βασκάνων ἀνθρώπων are supposed to favour it, but both interpretations are quite inconclusive. *Cf. supra.* The confession preceding denunciation was of incendiarism (*cf. supra*) and such language was less appropriate to Jews than to Christians. Melito favours the

view that those first seized turned renegade, or at least some of them. It is individual hostility of which he speaks, as Furneaux says, not that of a class. And no doubt non-Christian informers would be plenty. *Cf.* the προδόται of 2 Tim. iii. 4. No other authority is conscious of the theory, and even Poppæa's patronage of Judaism, and the Jews Alityrus and Tiberius Alexander at Court, are not enough to build it on, when the authorities decisively favour—

(4) The Christians were from the first the only accused and the only sufferers. So Arnold, Aubé, etc. All the evidence, including the silence of Josephus, points decisively this way. There is no evidence against it, for a petitio principii, viz., that the Christians *must* have been inconspicuous and *must* have had the reputation of being harmless is no evidence, and is scarcely an argument.

I adopt therefore this view with entire confidence.

The Extent of the Persecution is another question hotly debated, *e.g.* (*a*) it was local and confined to Rome—as Dodwell, Gibbon, Merivale, Arnold, Duruy, Schiller: (*b*) it was general, the example set at Rome being quickly followed in the provinces, as Aubé, Keim, Renan, Allard, Champagny ii. 26 (who is precisely ridiculous). Orosius vii. 7 asserts (*b*) roundly. There is *no* satisfactory evidence of (*b*) in the sense that Nero issued a general edict of persecution. Tertullian, Adv. Nat. i. 7, and Sulpic. Sev. *loc. cit.* are valueless as, *e.g.*, against the silence of Tacitus and ignorance of Pliny. The Pompeian Graffito—C. I. L. iv. 679—as interpreted by De Rossi, followed by Allard, would prove a persecution here, but Zangemeister ad C. I. L. and Schiller do well to doubt it. The Spanish Inscr. to prove a persecution in Spain is notoriously a forgery. *Cf.* C. I. L. ii. * 231; Gibbon, c. 16, p. 89 note. *But* the Christian evidence, *q.v.*, *does* prove sporadic persecution in Asia (*cf.* especially Apoc. 2. 13) and permanent insecurity of Christians everywhere.

C.—The Basis of the Persecution:

The evidence shows:

(*a*) That Christians *could* be prosecuted on specific charges, as incendiarism, majestas, magic.

(*b*) That Christians *could* be condemned simply on confession of the 'name,' this being taken by the magistrate *per se* to merit suppression.

(*c*) That this condemnation for the 'name' was a police matter, the sentence being passed by the magistrate in virtue of his right of coercitio. There were no general edicts issued against the Christians.

(*d*) That this was the case from the first moment that Christianity attracted unfavourably the notice of the Roman government, *i.e.* from Nero. And there is no change of procedure between Nero and Trajan. The magistrate (in Rome the Emperor or his delegate the City Prefect: in the provinces the governor) can always if he likes proceed against the Christians if he finds cause. Trajan's famous letter to Pliny is no issue of a new edict, no establishment of a new procedure, no "inauguration of a new era," but establishes new rules (more favourable to the Christians) for the conduct of the old procedure, viz.: as regards the admission of evidence. Nor does Vespasian first institute or allow persecution for the 'name.' The Christians are liable to this and punished for this under Nero, though more definite charges can always be added.

(*e*) There is no evidence that the Christians under Nero were punished either as members of collegia illicita or as diviners, both frequent grounds of condemnation in the second century. Their crimes are not expressly explained to be either sacrilege or treason, which Tertullian explains as grounds of attack in his day. (Apol. 10.) The terms used are, under Nero, if they are not punished as incendiaries, not so precise. They suffer as 'evil-doers' or as 'Christians' in virtue of their 'odium,' their 'superstition,' their generally disreputable character. Doubtless the secrecy of their associations and their hatred of existing religions explain their unpopularity both with people and government. But these are *not* stated in the first century to be the legal basis of their condemnation. The punishments endured are doubtless those for majestas (Paulus. sent. v. 29. 1) and magic (ib. v. 53. 17). But this is no proof that they suffered on these charges, and only on these or such specific ones under Nero, any more than when they endured the like punishments in the following centuries.

Of these five points the first three are generally accepted since Mommsen published his famous paper. All cives, he declares, were liable to this coercitio who refused worship to the Roman gods, and all non-cives who threatened in any way to disturb the peace, *e.g.* bandits, footpads, temple-breakers, etc. The Christians were not, like the Jews, expressly absolved from the crimen laesae Romanae religionis. So *cf.* Modestinus, ap. Dig. 48. 13. 4.; Ulpian, ap. Dig. 1. 18. 13.; Mommsen, Provinces ii. p. 199 n. *Cf.* too Hülle, Lightfoot, 'Ignatius' and Hardy, pp. 77 *sq.*

But (*d*) is vigorously challenged both by those who regard Trajan or Domitian as the first systematic persecutor of the Christian as

such (as Aubé, Hasenclever, Allard, Neumann), and especially by Ramsay, who vigorously maintains a theory of his own, viz., that the "short method with dissenters," *i.e.* punishment for the 'name,' originated with Vespasian, between A.D. 75 and 80; but under Nero some definite crime had always to be proved against a Christian. As regards Trajan, he supports the view repeated here in (*d*), but as regards Nero he will have none of it. Nero's principle is "essentially different." Punishment for the name begins with Vespasian.

I am quite unable to accept Ramsay's view. There seems no creditable evidence for it and indubitable evidence against it. Mommsen calls his arguments "evidently unsolid," and I must agree with him. For

(1) Probability is against the view. Rome was quite familiar with the punishment of new religions and of religious fanatics as such. The superstition implied crimes, as did the earlier Bacchanalian Conspiracy, and evidence of belonging to the sect would therefore by itself be enough to secure conviction.

(2) Direct evidence is against it, viz., non-Christian, of Suetonius, where the Christians are clearly spoken of as punished as Christians. And Tacitus' evidence is *not* contradictory. 'Odium' is *not* a definite charge, nor implies a definite offence, as, *e.g.*, magic. It is the explanation of the infliction of the penalty, *not* the legal basis of condemnation. *Cf. supra.*

(3) And Christian, viz., First Epist. Peter iii. 16; iv. 12-16; dated, irrespective of this controversy, at *c.* A.D. 64. *q.v.*

(4) And the Apocalypse—*q.v.*—dated, irrespective of this controversy, at Dec. A.D. 68. *Cf.* too the possible references in Hermas.

(5) The only evidence that Vespasian persecuted the Christians is said to be that of Hilary. Otherwise in general no persecutor or persecution is ordinarily inserted between Nero and Domitian. And, as Mommsen says, "Vespasian was far too practical for such a crusade."

(6) Pliny in his Correspondence with Trajan seems quite ignorant of any regulation by Vespasian of the method of treatment, or his "placing the crime upon the statute book." Yet had such existed he would naturally have referred to it.

Two arguments are put forward in favour of the theory:

(1) St Paul's acquittal is supposed to have formed, as it were, a "Charter of Freedom" for the new religion as such. *Cf.* Ramsay's St Paul, p. 308.

But the very fact of this acquittal is doubtful. And even granting this, the whole matter lay within the magistrate's discretion. He could condemn for the name or, if he chose, he could acquit. And in A.D. 63 no special cause for condemnation had arisen, especially in case of a civis. The

'charter' idea and its supposed "immense importance" seems to me very strained language.

(2) The Pastoral Epistles urge avoidance of reproaches as evil-doers, and so escape from persecution. There is no glorying in the name, as in the Apocalypse.

But these may precede the summer of A.D. 64, and as the magistrate could always inquire into specific charges, it was well to avoid the possibility of such accusations. It does not follow that he always *did* so inquire. And *cf.* the combination in the First Epist. of St Peter iii. 14, iv. 15, 16. See also note to chap. x. § 1.

I therefore hold by (*d*), and cannot accept Ramsay's view.

APPENDIX C

NERO'S TITLES, ETC.

After his adoption by Claudius and acquisition of the name of Nero (see p. 38), Nero's title becomes Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, with of course the prefix Imp.—for Imperator—on his coming to power.

He was Consul five times, viz.: i. Jan. 1 A.D. 55 for two months; ii. *ib.* A.D. 57 for six months; iii. *ib.* A.D. 58 for four months; iv. *ib.* A.D. 60 for six months; v. *ib.* A.D. 68, and without a colleague probably at first. *Cf.* Sueton. Nero 14; Henzen. Acta. Frat. Arval. pp. 172, 239; Sievers, p. 134.

He received the salutation of Imperator twelve times, viz. (those alone which can be dated with precision mainly from the Arval Tablets and coins): i. Oct. 13 A.D. 54 on accession; iii. A.D. 57; vi. A.D. 59; vii. A.D. 60; viii. A.D. 61; ix. A.D. 61 or 62; xi. A.D. 66; xii. A.D. 67. *Cf.* also C. I. L. iii. 6123 and p. 845; C. I. L. ii. 4888. Schiller's list, pp. 309-310, needs revision.

A difficulty exists as regards the dating of his various acceptances of Tribunician power. Succeeding Claudius on Oct. 13 A.D. 54 his Trib. Pot. i. might naturally count from Oct. 13, 54—Oct. 12, 55. But the Arval Acts show sacrifice for Nero's Tribunicia Potestas on Dec. 4. Moreover they also date Jan. 3, 59 as Trib. Pot. v.—but Jan. 1, 60 as Trib. Pot. vii. Whereas coins combine the Trib. Pot. vi. with his Cos. iv., *i.e.* Jan.-June 60. The confusion is thus considerable and various systems are suggested. Henzen thinks the Dec. 4 date has nothing to do with the acceptance of the power, but only with its Renuntiatio before the people. But Schiller, p. 309 n., argues against this. The coins and Arval Acts are so inconsistent that the supposition of Nero's making a change in his method of reckoning on Jan. 1, 60, seems probable. The usual beginning of the Tribunician year was on Dec. 10, and if Nero proposed (for reasons unknown) to bring his own tribunician

years into harmony with this, we obtain the following system: Trib. Pot. i. Oct. 13, 54 to Oct. 12, 55; ii. Oct. 13, 55—Oct. 12, 56; iii. Oct. 13, 56—Oct. 12, 57; iv. Oct. 13, 57—Oct. 12, 58; v. Oct. 13, 58—Oct. 12, 59; vi. Oct. 13, 59—Dec. 9, 59—but the coinage followed the old system; vii. Dec. 10, 59—Dec. 9, 60. *Or* we might regard the change as one from Oct. 13 to Dec. 4 and keep the system as above, substituting Dec. 4 for Dec 10. To suppose the Trib. Pot. i. to have been only from Oct. 13, 54 (or Dec. 4, 53 by a fiction) to Dec. 3, 54, brings Trib. Pot. v. from Dec. 4, 57—Dec. 3, 58 which does not suit the Arval Acts cited *supra*. From vii. to xv. they run regularly. *Cf.* especially Mommsen, Staatsrecht, 3rd edit. ii. p. 798 n. Cagnat, Cours d'Epigraphie Latine, pp. 177-178. Mommsen in Hermes ii. pp. 56-63 is out of date, and he himself rejects its theory—ap. Staatsrecht *loc. cit.* We obtain therefore the following table:

Year.	Day.	Cos.	Trib. Pot.	Imp.
54	Oct. 13	...	i	i
55	Jan. 1 Oct. 13	i (to March 1)	ii	...
56	Oct. 13	...	iii	...
57	Jan. 1 Oct. 13	ii (to July 1)	iv	iii
58	Jan. 1 Oct. 13	iii (to May 1)	v	...
59	Oct. 13 Dec. 4 (? 10)	...	vi—to Dec. 3 or 9 vii	vi
60	Jan. 1 Dec. 4 (? 10)	iv (to July 1)	viii	vii
61	Dec. 4 (? 10)	...	ix	viii
62	Dec. 4 (? 10)	...	x	ix
63	Dec. 4 (? 10)	...	xi	...
64	Dec. 4 (? 10)	...	xii	...
65	Dec. 4 (? 10)	...	xiii	...
66	Dec. 4 (? 10)	...	xiv	xi
67	Dec. 4 (? 10)	...	xv	xii
68	Jan. 1	v	...	...

Nero died June 9 A.D. 68 thus as Trib. Pot. xv. Imp. xii. Cos. v.

NOTES

NOTES

CHAPTER I

[The "*op. cit.*" after a name, or the name alone, of a modern writer, implies the book, etc., which will be found under his name in the "Bibliography" appended.]

Sect. 1. Main ancient authority: Suetonius, Nero 1-6. *Cf.* Dio lxi. 2.

Page 21. Suetonius takes the hostile view, Velleius ii. 10 the favourable. The silence of Tacitus makes Schiller (p. 61 n.) believe Suetonius exaggerates. *Cf.* Stahr, "Agrippina," pp. 8-9.

Page 21. For some more than usually foolish remarks *à propos* of Nero's birth on the day on which Tiberius died (which is not the case), *cf.* Beulé, *op. cit.* iii. p. 275. Latour St Ybars, *op. cit.* p. 38, expands Beulé's idea with greater precision of physiological detail. For the evil omen of feet-first, *cf.* Pliny, N. H. vii. 45. It failed in the case of Agrippa, unless his wife Julia was enough to fulfil it.

Page 22. Suetonius, Nero 39.

Sect. 2. Main ancient authority, Tacitus, Ann. xi., xii. 1-8

Page 24. Schiller (p. 63) believes that the dancer and the barber managed to "sow the seeds of later follies" in their pupil, aged 3!

Page 24. Anicetus "educator": Ann. xiv. 3, 5. Beryllus: Josephus, Antiq. xx. 8, 9; who describes him as τάξιν τὴν ἐπὶ τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν ἐπιστολῶν πεπιστευμένος, in A.D. 60. Schiller and Duruy identify the Greek freedman with Burrus the praetorian prefect, which gives occasion to the French writer to question the prefect's honesty (iv. p. 7). But Josephus himself seems to distinguish the two, and the Vasio inscription found in 1884 (C. I. L. xii. 5842) proves the identification of the two impossible. See it quoted *infra*, note to sect. 4, page 40.

Page 25. A well-known discrepancy exists in the accounts of the date of Britannicus' birth. Tacitus, Ann. xii. 25. 3, makes Nero only two years his senior and thus dates his birth in A.D. 39-40; Suetonius, Claud. 27, on the "vicesimo imperii die inque secundo consulatu" of Claudius, where the first three words imply Feb. 13, A.D. 41, and the last three, Feb. 13, A.D. 42. Dio lx. 12 adopts A.D. 42, perhaps from his interpretation of Suetonius. Tacitus, Ann. xiii. 15. 1, dates it at A.D. 41. An Alexandrian coin of A.D. 41 depicts Messalina with both her children and thus puts A.D. 42 out of court (Eckhel. iv. 52). Lehmann proposes in the Suetonius passage to read "In Q. Secundi consulatu"—but the MS. error in this case must be older than Dio, as L. himself points out (p. 132 n.). A.D. 41 is the most probable date, and the change of "biennio" in Ann. xii. 25. 3 to "triennio" is paralleled in iii. 31. 1. So Furneaux, note ad. xii. 25. 3.

Octavia was certainly older than her brother (*cf.* Suetonius, Claud. 27) and the "vicesimo anno" of Ann. xiv. 64. 1, must be a MS. error, if for duo et vicesimo (the easiest emendation) she would be one year Britannicus' senior. *Cf.* Lehmann, p. 367 ; Schiller, p. 83 ; Furneaux *ad loc.*

Page 26. *Cf.* Vergil, Aen. v. 545 *sqq.*

Page 27. Messalina's Death : *cf.* Ann. xi. 26-38 ; Dio lx. 30, 31 ; Suetonius, Claud. 26, 28, 29. Suetonius has a different story, viz., that Claudius knew and approved of the mock marriage to avert a supposed danger which threatened him. Tacitus' story *may* come from Agrippina's Memoirs, of course a most tainted source. Tacitus, however, solemnly assures us that he has exaggerated his authorities, whom he evidently judges worthy of credence, not a whit. The Suetonius story sacrifices any fragment of Claudius' reputation for common sense which the Tradition still spares to us upon the altar of Messalina's virtue. But as a probably much underrated feature in the Emperor's character is to be preserved at the expense of a woman's reputation which in any case, if there is any credit at all in our tradition, is beyond salvation, I follow with some hesitation the more extraordinary of the two versions current. *Cf.* Raabe, *op. cit.* c. 2.

Page 30. Junia Calvina : *cf.* Seneca, Ludus c. 8.

Page 30. Dio lx. 32 : "Τόν τε κλαύδιον ἐσφετερίσατο." Her love of wealth (not for its own sake) : Dio *ib.* "ingenita avaritia" : Ann. xiii. 18. 3. Her memoirs : *cf.* Appendix A.

Sect. 3. Main ancient authority : Seneca, Ad Helviam, Ad Polybium, and allusions in his other works *passim.*

Page 32. The Seneca family : *Annaeus Seneca :* praenomen Lucius in MSS. 54 B.C.—39 A.D. *Cf.* Controv. i. Praef. 2. 11 ; Sen. Epist. 108. 22. *Helvia : cf.* Sen. Consolatio ad Helviam *passim*, espec. 2 and 14-18. *Gallio : cf.* Sen. Ad Helv. xvi. 12 ; Nat. Quaest. iv. Praef. 9-11 ; Epist. 104, 1 ; Dio lx. 35 ; Pliny, Nat. Hist. xxxi. 62 ; Acta Apost. xviii. 12 *sq.* Pliny mentions his consulship (*loc. cit.*) as it seems does a wax tablet found at Pompeii (Tab. Cer. Pomp. 115 : *cf.* Nipperdey ap. Hermes xii. 130)—but its date is unknown. *Mela : cf.* Sen. Ad Helv. xvi. 12 ; Tacitus, Ann. xvi. 17 ; Suetonius, vit. Lucani. *Lucan :* see separate bibliography *infra.*

The date of Seneca's birth is quite uncertain, the only evidence being that he remembered having heard Asinius Pollio (De Tranq. An. 15. 13) who died A.D. 5 (Sen. Controv. iv. Praef. 5 and Jerome, Chron.). *Cf.* Diepenbrock, "Seneca," p. 17.

Page 32. Sen. Ad Helv. xvii. 4-6. I arrange the prefects of Egypt as follows : Aemilius Rectus, 16 A.D.; Vitrasius Pollio, 16-32 ; Hiberus, 32-39 ; C. Vitrasius Pollio, 39-42 ; L. Aemilius Rectus, A.D. 42—*cf.* Dio lvii. 10 ; lviii. 19. Pliny, N. H. xxxvi. 57. In the long controversy on the subject I have no hesitation in believing Helvia's sister to have been wife of Pollio, not of Aemilius Rectus, as also Lipsius (ad Ad Helv. *loc. cit.*), Teuffel (Rom. Lit. 282, 1), and Lehmann (*op. cit.* p. 8 n., 153) hold against Borghesi (Op. iv. 439) and Dessau (Prosop. Imp. Rom. ii. p. 134). It involves a date for Seneca's Quaestorship which is later than the earliest possible, but this is not unnatural for a novus homo, and Pollio suits the scanty indications afforded by Seneca's early life far better than does Aemilius Rectus.

Governor's wives in the provinces : *cf.* Ann. iii. 33.

Page 33. Seneca, Epist. 95, 23. Sotion : Epist. 108, 17-22 ; 49, 2.

Page 33. Attalus : *cf.* Sen. Epist. 108, 3. 13-16. 23 ; 110, 13-18 ; 67, 15; Nat. Quaest. ii. 48, 2 ; 50, 1. Quoted by Seneca, Epist. 63, 5 ; 72, 10; 81, 21. Seneca also attended lectures by Papirius Fabianus, Epist. 100, 1, 2 ; *cf.* 52, 11. "Philosophiae . . . vitam debeo," Epist. 78, 2 ; *cf.* Epist. 54. Dio lix. 19. Stoicism encouraged suicide under conditions. *Cf.* chap. ix. sect. 2. Only this ill-health of Seneca's throws doubts on the authenticity of the bust at Berlin which depicts a man of apparently robust health. The popular wild-faced "Seneca" portrait is undoubtedly *not* Seneca, but will, I suppose, continue to be so labelled in works of edification and popular histories.

Page 34. Most modern writers assert Seneca was married twice, *e.g.* Martens, Lehmann, Heikel, and Hicks in Enc. Brit. There seems however no reason why the "wife" of the De Ira iii. 36, and Epist. 50 should not be Paulina, save Seneca's silence about her in his writings during his exile. But in any case he is silent about the first wife, whose name on the theory of two remains quite unknown. Nor is there any hint of a double marriage in our ancient authorities where naturally it might occur, *e.g.* Ann. xiii. 42 or Dio lxi. 10. Products of curious value may be extracted from the argumentum ex silentio, but not to my thinking a second wife for a philosopher. Date of the De Ira more probably 41 A.D. than 49 A.D. *Cf.* Martens and Diepenbrock's criticisms (pp. 44-49) on Lehmann (p. 11). The allusion to the "clara nobilis aut formosa conjux" in the Ad Marciam suggests a thought of Paulina = Dio's γάμον ἐπιφανέστατον, and this was probably written before the exile, as Lehmann (p. 9) and Buresch (Leipziger, Studien. 1886, p. 170) hold against Martens. The chronology of Seneca's writings is perplexingly uncertain.

Pompeia Paulina : clearly daughter of Paulinus the praefectus Annonae c. A.D. 49 (Pliny, N. H. xxxiii. 143, Sen. De brev. vit. 1, 18) and sister of the legate of Upper Germany of A.D. 56 (Ann. xv. 18). Wealth of the latter : *cf.* Pliny, *loc. cit.*, Dessau, Prosop. Imp. Rom. iii. 479, 480. Seneca alludes to her Epist. 104. 4, 5.

Children : Ad Helv. ii. 5, xviii. 3. Epigr. s. exilio 8.

Page 35. Seneca's exile : Tacitus, Ann. xiii. 42. The "justissimum exilium" is but the accusation of the informer Suillius, a discreditable and discredited witness : and the "iniuria" of xii. 8. 3, suggests a belief in his innocence. Dio lx. 8 tells the whole story and certainly suggests the charge was trumped up. If the less favourable view in lxi. 10 contains his own view as well as that of Seneca's accusers (*cf.* ἀπέχρησεν for ἀποχρῆσαι), Dio's hostility to the philosopher is known. Even Julia's guilt is uncertain. Seneca himself harms his case the most in the Cons. ad Polybium xiii. 2, 3. Boissier (Relig. Rom. ii. 20-22) thinks his eminence cause of his exile : Lehmann (pp. 156-157) the Republican tone of the Cons. ad Marciam. But this was a stock in trade damaged by long-keeping. Hochart (Vie de Sénèque p. 88) may be neglected. The Cons. ad Helviam curiously supplies no argument on either side : for the acquiescence in his fate is too stoical to be proof of the consciousness of desert.

Page 35. Cons. ad Helviam, *passim.* Date A.D. 42 or 43. Corsica "terribilis, saevior, barbara, horrida," etc. ap. Epigr. 1 and 2. Lehmann's eulogy on Seneca (p. 204) for this treatise turns out not very well deserved. *Cf.* next note.

Page 36. Consolatio ad Polybium, *passim*. If this is not the same as Seneca's "Panegyric on Messalina and the freedmen," ap. Dio lxi. 10, as Heikel with probability believes (denied, *e.g.*, by Lehmann)—the latter work is lost. Date *c.* A.D. 44, from "Britanniam aperiat" of c. 13. For Polybius, *cf.* Suetonius, Claud. 28, Dio lx. 29, and the Consolatio, *passim*.

Page 36. Seneca's recall: *cf.* Ann. xii. 8, xiv. 53; Probus, Schol. ad Juvenal. Sat. v. 109, who makes him eager to live at Athens and only reluctantly return to Rome—I know not on what authority.

Page 38. Seneca on education: De Ira ii. 19, 20, 21. His education of Nero: Suetonius, Nero 52; *cf. ib.* 7; Schol. ad Juv. Sat. v. 109: condemned by Schiller (pp. 69-71), Duruy (iv. pp. 5, 6), Renan (L'Antichrist, p. 125); Beulé (pp. 325-328, amusing and sensible). Schiller insists on the peculiar difficulty of the task—which is an assumption. We know nothing of the supposed help given him by the philosophers Alexander of Aegae and Chaeremon, ap. Suidas. *sub voc.* Alex. Three philosophers together not allowed to expound their subject to the boy! Perhaps they made it up by discussions among themselves. If so, Nero's education *may* have been neglected.

Seneca's writings of the time: Ad Novatum De Ira—in three formless and discursive books: ? A.D. 41 from i. 16, iii. 19: *cf.* note to p. 34 *supra*. Ad Paulinum De brevitate vitae, a plea for the quiet study of philosophy, A.D. 49 (from 13. 8 with Tacitus, Ann. xii. 23. Gellius xiii. 14, 4. 7), and possibly Ad Serenum De tranquillitate animi—as Lehmann. But I prefer Martens' date of 62 A.D. for this. For the Ad Neronem Caesarem De Clementia, *cf. infra*, note on p. 61. His literary fame and style: *cf.* Quintilian, Inst. Or. x. i. 125-131; "Princeps eruditorum ac potentia": Pliny, N. H. xiv. 51.

Sect. 4. Main ancient authority, Tacitus, Ann. xii. Suetonius, Claud., and Dio lx. 32-35 (subsidiary). Precise dates mostly supplied here as throughout by the Acta fratrum Arvalium—ed. G. Henzen. Berlin, 1874.

Page 38. Significance of Title "Augusta," *cf.* Mommsen, Droit public romain (French Trans. of Staatsrecht), Tom. v. pp. 89-90, who suggests that besides being a title of great honour it may actually have conferred some participation of power. The matter remains very uncertain, but Dio lx. 33 lends the view some support.

Page 40. Nero's honours: Tacitus, Ann. xii. 25; Suetonius, Nero 7; Eckhel, Doct. Num. Vet. vi. pp. 260-263, 270. *Cf.* Schiller pp. 74-78. Britannicus' taunt: Suetonius *loc. cit.* represents it as forgetfulness. But the adoption was a year old, and Tacitus' version, Ann. xii. 41, is more probable. But Suetonius must needs accuse Nero of "immanitas" at as early an age as possible. Sosibius: *cf.* Ann. xi. 1-4. Dio lx. 32. Dio on Britannicus' education, etc., lx. 32, 33, is probably exaggerated: on his vigour and promise, lxi. 1. I reject Zonaras xi. 11 as improbable *per se* and not confirmed.

Page 40. Burrus: C. I. L. xii. 5842, found at Vaison=Vasio, caput of Civitas Vocontiorum, 20 miles north of Avignon, in October 1884. Reads—"Vasiens Voc. patrono Sex. Afranio Sex. f. Volt. Burro Trib. mil. proc. Augustae. proc. Ti. Caesar. proc. divi Claudi praef. praetori ornamentis consular." Augusta=Livia. *Cf.* Hirschfeld *ad loc.*

Page 41. The Fucine Lake: Ann. xii. 56, 57; Suetonius, Claud. 20,

21, 32 ; Dio lx. 33. This is the actual occasion of the "Ave Imperator" famous salutation, ap. Suetonius *loc. cit.*

For Prince Torlonia's work *cf.* L. Botti : "Documenti sul Fucino," Avezzano, 1893.

Page 42. Ann. xii. 58 ; Suetonius, Nero 7, who ascribes the speeches to A.D. 51 : Tacitus to A.D. 53. Hence Schiller and Lehmann divide them up between the years. Raabe (p. 64) keeps them together. Duruy iii. p. 549 puts them all in 52, for no obvious reason. Fabia (Rev. de Phil. xx. 1896, pp. 133-136) follows Tacitus, I think rightly—as Suetonius' chronology is almost worthless. Seneca doubtless supervised, but there is no reason to suppose that he was responsible for, the composition of the speeches.

Rhodes : cf. the ode of Antiphilus of Byzantium ap. Anthol. Palat. ix. 178 ; Inscr. Graec. Insul. i. 2 ; L'Année Epigraphique 1893, No. 55, and Eckhel, Doct. Num. Vet. ii. 605.

Page 43. Eckhel vi. 254. Mommsen, St. R. (Fr. Trans.) v. p. 101. *Cf.* coin of Smyrna ap. Cat. of Greek coins in British Museum. Ionia p. 270, Plate xxviii. 11.

Page 43. Ann. xii. 64. Nero's witness : Suetonius Nero 7. Charges of "ingratitude," "callous heartlessness," etc. etc., ap. Furneaux, pp. 52-53 ; Baring-Gould ii. p. 150 : remarks as easy as unfair. How do these know that the boy was callous or heartless?

Page 45. *Claudius' Death* : The account in the text follows Tacitus, Ann. xii. 66 *sqq.* Suetonius, Claud. 44 *sq.*, preserves some variants. To Josephus, Antiq. xx. 8, it is a rumour. We cannot now *prove* that Claudius was poisoned. The very variation in the accounts shows how they are built up out of gossip. There is no first-hand evidence, and possibly Tacitus' account is too circumstantial. But it must be remembered that the contemporary Pliny undoubtedly believed it (N. H. xxii. 92), and that the jest "mushrooms are food for the Gods" is ascribed to Nero himself (Dio lx. 34). Gallio's jest ap. Dio lx. 35 points in the same direction. Once throw the whole story overboard and there is no reason why we either should or should not hold any one of the many modern theories, that *e.g.* the mushroom was a poisonous fungus by mistake (Ranke, 108, 307-310), that Claudius died of paralysis (Baring-Gould), or apoplexy (Fountain, who at least is amusing). I return to Tacitus' account, at least with an increased intellectual, if not moral, satisfaction. In such cases absence of certain proof does not = disproof.

Lucusta : Cf. Juvenal i. 71-72, and Mayor *ad loc.*

Xenophon of Cos. : cf. 1. Dubois, Marcel : Un médecin de l'Empereur Claude—ap. Bull. de Corr. Hellénique v. 1881, pp. 468-476. 2. Brian, Réné : Un médecin de l'Empereur Claude, ap. Révue Archéologique Nouv. Série. xxiii., Paris 1883, pp. 203-216. 3. Hübner. Röm. Herrschaft p. 12 (*cf.* Britain—Bibliography *infra*). Pliny, N. H. xxix. 5.

The Comet : Pliny, N. H. ii. 92.

Page 45. Pater Patriæ : This title Nero probably accepted on Oct. 13, A.D. 55. It appears on his coins of the next year. Eckhel vi. p. 263.

Page 46. Claudius' Testament : In Britannicus' favour according to Suetonius, Claud. 44 (implied) and *e.g.* Merivale's (expressed) opinions.

Claudius' Deification : *cf.* Seneca, Ludus *passim*. Pliny, Panegyr. 11, says Nero acted in a spirit of mockery. That however he ever cancelled the deification — as Suetonius, Claud. 45 — is disproved by the Divus Claudius of the Acta Arvalium and innumerable other

inscriptions throughout the reign. *Cf.* Nordmeyer, De Oct. Trag. pp. 39 *sqq.*

CHAPTER II

Sect. 1. *Page* 49. Naturally Nero's first political speeches were at any rate largely composed for him, as the King's speech to Parliament, and his early oratory seems to show that his "need of another's eloquence," of which some complained, was not an innate disability of the young Prince.

Page 50. Pallas. *Cf.* Ann. xii. 53. Pliny, Ep. vii. 29; 8, 6.

Page 54. The comparison is between Seneca's Consolatio ad Polybium, ? A.D. 44, and the Ludus de Morte Claudii Caesaris, written for the Saturnalia, *i.e.*, Dec. 17-24, A.D. 54. No one can accept Stahr's lengthy à priori argument against Seneca's authorship of the Ludus ("Agrippina," pp. 330-343), nor does any one seriously question its identification with the Ἀποκολοκύντωσις of Dio lx. 35, though there seems no particular opportunity for the "Pumpkinification" or "Immortalization as a cabbage-head" (Ball, p. 52) of Claudius in the extant work. The only difficulty in the way of Seneca's authorship is the genuine fun of the Satire, a quality of which he nowhere else gives the faintest trace. The subject and the occasion must have inspired him. It is a rare example of humorous invention in Latin prose.

The latest very complete edition of the Satire by A. P. Ball (Columbia University Press, 1902) defends Seneca's authorship vigorously and the Ludus—Ἀποκολοκύντωσις identification with ingenious suggestions. This editor thinks nothing is lost at the end. But the "fun-difficulty" seems hardly to be felt by him who is "tempted . . . to cite the Apocolocyntosis among the writings of Seneca as a kind of sausage among the more ambrosial viands of his moral philosophy" (pp. 58-59.)

My own rendering of the poem was in type before I had the advantage of seeing his, and is therefore retained.

For Claudius' qualities, *cf.*, *e.g.*, besides: superstition: Ann. xi. 4; administration of justice: Ann. xi. 1-4; Messalina and the freedmen: Dio lx. 14, 29; Suetonius 28 *sqq.*, etc.

"Sidus hoc, quod precipitato in profundum et demerso in tenebras orbi refulsit, semper luceat!" (Ad. Polyb. xiii. 1). The metaphor is applied by the Translators of the Bible to King James I., with such felicity and aptness, that one wonders which of them was acquainted with Seneca's praise of Claudius. He must have mightily enjoyed his brethren's ignorance of its source.

Page 55. The Speech: Ann. xiii. 4. Its reception: Dio lxi. 3. *Cf.* lix. 6. Composed by Seneca: Dio lxi. 3: not stated by Tacitus.

Sect. 2. *Page* 57. Silanus: Ann. xiii. 1; Dio lxi. 6; Pliny, N. H. vii. 58. Baring-Gould (p. 158) argues he died a natural death. Dispense with all the ancient evidence, and one can believe anything one likes. Narcissus: Ann. xiii. 1; Dio lx. 34; Seneca, Ludus 13. Agrippina's position: Ann. xiv. 11, 1; Dio lxi. 3. ("Τῷ ἐκείνου ὀνόματι καπηλεύουσα πάντα" is Zonaras); Suetonius, Nero 9. Coins: Eckhel vi. 257, 258, 259. So her head appears with Nero's on, *e.g.*, coins of Antioch, Cyme, Alexandria, Nicaea, Mytilene, Smyrna and (alone) on those of Corinth.

Cf. Cat. of Greek coins in British Museum, sub vocc. Cohen I. p. 275. The association of Agr. on the coins seems to belong to the last years of Claudius' reign and first six months of Nero's only. *Cf.* Mommsen, St. R. Fr. Trans. v. pp. 51, 101, 102, who explains it by her "ephemeral usurpation of power."

Page 60. Ann. xiii. 5-11. Suetonius, Nero 10. Acta. Fr. Arv. pp. 61, 62. Seneca acc. to Tacitus composed the speeches. They probably did reflect credit both on his own talent and on his pupil. Trials of Celer and Densus stopped; Plautius Lateranus recalled from exile. *Cf.* Tacitus *loc. cit.*

Page 61. Seneca, De Clementia i. 1, and *passim.* Date and purpose of this treatise are matter of great controversy. Lehmann and Kreyher ("Seneca," p. 22) urge on à priori grounds of Seneca's character that it *cannot* have been written after Britannicus' death. Baring-Gould on the same ground, accepting the date after, argues that therefore Britannicus *cannot* have been murdered (II. p. 170). Dorison (Quid de Clementia senserit L. A. Seneca. Cadomi 1892, cap. 2), accepts later date and B.'s murder, and thinks it written to dissuade Nero from an already planned murder of Agrippina! Duruy iv. p. 13, and Diepenbrock pp. 102-3 are more hard-hearted.

The Treatise really dates itself in ix. 2. "Nero . . . duodevicesimum egressus annum" = Nero is just past the age of 18 = after Dec. 15, A.D. 55. Britannicus was born Feb. 13, A.D. 41 (*cf.* note to c. i. sect. 2), and died the day after his fourteenth birthday (Ann. xiii. 15, 1), *i.e.* Feb. 14, 55 A.D. The De Clementia was therefore published some ten months after his murder. The à priori arguments are quite worthless.

The obvious purpose of the treatise is to recommend "fruits of mercie and magnitude," as Lipsius says, to the young Emperor in general terms. Ranke, however, (p. 134) suggests its real purpose to have been "to make a monarchy instead of a despotism," by insisting on the identity of interests of prince and subjects. The unfinished state of the extant text somewhat increases the difficulty, always inherent in Seneca's rambling writings, of saying any particular object is *not* intended. In any case the opening remarks must be typical of Seneca's training of Nero, and I use them so confidently. Their reaction on his relations with Agrippina is a deduction I have no hesitation in making.

"Chief need of the monarch an honest adviser," ap. Sen. De Benef. vi. 30, 3.

Sect. 3. *Page* 63. Acte: Ann xiii. 12, 13; Dio lxi. 7; Suetonius, Nero 50. Tacitus asserts definitely that Seneca encourages Nero and helps him by his friend Annaeus Serenus, the praefectus vigilum, who screens Nero's passion by allowing his own name to be used. To *this* Serenus Seneca dedicates his treatises: "De Constantia Sapientis" and "De Tranquillitate animi," a fact quite significant of the attitude of philosophy to such a liaison. It was no more its concern than was Serenus' taste for mushrooms. (*Cf.* Epist. 63, 12. Pliny, N. H. 22, 96). Claudia Acte: full name on Inscr. at Velitrae, where she had a villa. C. I. L. x. 6589. Character "subiecta et humilis." *Cf.* the "Octavia" v. 193 *sq.* The "Monumenta Extruit" here is aptly illustrated by the "Cereri sacrum [Claudia] Aug. lib. Acte" of the Pisan Duomo. C. I. L. xi. 1414. *Cf.* Ladek, *op. cit.* pp. 24-26. The tradition of her Christianity is based on Chrysostom. Hom. 46, 13—of a concubine of

Nero's converted by S. Paul. C. does not give any name—and in any case such evidence is worthless. Renan (L'Antichrist, n. p. 11) rejects the identification even.

Page 64. Pallas' dismissal: Ann. xiii. 14. Claudius [Etruscus]: *cf.* Statius' Silvae iii. 3 and Vollmer *ad loc.* pp. 406-413. The long list of his duties in vv. 86-105 shows the importance of the office "A Rationibus." Knights take the place of freedmen in the Palace Civil Service after Vitellius: Tacitus, Hist. i. 58.

Page 64. Ann. xiii. 14; Dio lxi. 7. Raabe's theory (p. 108) that Agrippina was merely playing a "Comedy," seeking to frighten Nero back to his obedience, is *not* a happy one.

Perhaps it was at this time that she began the building of a Temple to Divus Claudius on the Caelian. (Suetonius, Vesp. 9.)

Sect. 4. *Page* 65. I follow Duruy iv. p. 11, in accepting Lipsius' suggestion that the "Carmen" of Tacitus' account=Ennius' verses ap. Cic. Tusc. iii. 19, 44. To those who think this too daring an identification I plead that the impression these lines produce on the sympathetic reader must be so similar to that of Britannicus' song on his companions that the higher historical truth does not suffer.

Page 67. *Britannicus' Death*: I follow the account in Tacitus, Ann. xiii. 15-17—and content myself for the most part with it after consideration. "Added details" in plenty ap. Dio lxi. 7; Suetonius, Nero 33; Titus i. a few of which I have adopted. Tacitus here as in the tale of Claudius' poisoning appeals to "contemporary historians" as his authorities. In any small case of disagreement I follow Tacitus. If I reject some additions—*e.g.* the Dio "Chalk" story—I do so because "the legend in 150 years had plenty of time to grow," and Dio, as sole authority in such a case, is not good enough.

The choice of some and rejection of other details must in any case seem somewhat arbitrary, and some have rejected the tale of the poisoning altogether. The whole discussion would fill a not inconsiderable volume. Thus while, *e.g.*, Latour St Ybars, Wiedemeister, Duruy, Schiller, Hertzberg, and Furneaux accept at least the main outline of the Tacitean story (as I have done) and some of them swallow a good deal more, Ranke hesitates, and the sceptics, beginning with Reinhold in 1839, include G. H. L. [ewes?] in the *Cornhill* for 1863 (who thus is not, as he claims to be, the first sceptic), Baring-Gould, Stahr, and Dr Fountain (who I fancy borrows considerably from G. H. L. for his amusing lecture). Raabe [pp. 120-140] makes an elaborate reply to G. H. L. of doubtful value.

The main grounds of attack (apart from à priori ones of Nero's youth, etc. etc., so dear, *e.g.*, to Stahr and Baring-Gould, which we must sternly reject) are—1. No poison known to the ancients could act so speedily. 2. No known poison instantaneously turns the face black. But 2. fails with the abandonment of the Chalk story of Dio which is not worth keeping. 1. is an assumption vigorously denied, *e.g.*, by Raabe, who went the round of his Toxicological-specialist friends, and mocks the "dilettante" G. H. L. Of course the sceptics one and all assert that the boy died of epilepsy, and had always been subject to it.

Thus if specialists disagree we are thrown back on our ancient evidence. It is of course only circumstantial. Yet it is really unanimous that the boy was wilfully poisoned. And *if* funeral preparations were

begun while he was still alive, this is decisive. The hurried funeral is also to be considered. Was B. liable to epilepsy? He is elsewhere described as of bodily strength beyond his compeers (Xiph.—Dio lxi. 1). And Agrippina is said to have spread reports of his epileptic tendencies to discredit him. [Dio lx. 33.] Was Nero using the same device? Admitting the possibility of the poisoning, the motive for the crime is clear from the course of the narrative. To argue as do Fountain and Baring-Gould that Nero had no motive for the crime is absurd. Seneca too is made by Tacitus (Ann. xv. 62, 63) to speak later of the crime as a fact.

A recent English theologian condemns certain evidence as "almost worthless because on the hypothesis of its being false we can say with confidence that it or something like it would have been invented." If we apply here this most stringent and dangerous of Canons we may conclude that the "scriptores eorum temporum" of whom Tacitus speaks were not over likely to invent so circumstantial a tale at some risk to themselves had it been entirely false. The Counsel for the defence can damage the evidence greatly and yet the historical jury may dismiss the appeal. For the defence may *per se* be more unlikely than the prosecution. "All your witnesses are liars, every one of them—without collusion I admit, but all of them liars. I have no witnesses on my side at all. But if yours all lie, I must be right." It does not follow, nor is the previous argument probable.

Page 68. Seneca, De Clementia (*cf.* note *supra*)—*passim*—especially i. 2, 8-11, 13, 19, 26. Merivale and Raabe believe Seneca cognisant of the murder from the first.

Sect. 5. *Page* 70. Ann. xiii. 19-22; Suetonius, Nero 34; Dio lxi. 8. Paris: Ann. xiii. 27; Digest xii. 4. 3. sect. 5. Domitia: Suetonius, Nero 34; Dio lxi. 17.

Page 71. Amalasontha and Athalaric, A.D. 526 *sqq.* *Cf.* Gibbon, vol. iv. c. 41; Irene and Constantine VI., A.D. 780 *sqq.*, *ib.* v. c. 48; Theodora of the "golden apple" and Michael III., A.D. 842 *sqq.*, *ib.* v. c. 48. The quotations in the text are all from Gibbon.

CHAPTER III

Sect. 1. *Page* 76. *The Quinq. Neronis.* Trajan ap. Aurel. Victor, Vit. Caes. Epit. 5. "Quinquennium tamen tantus fuit [Nero] augenda urbe maxime, uti merito Trajanus saepius testaretur procul differre cunctos principes Neronis quinquennio, quo etiam Pontum in jus provinciae . . . redegit . . . itemque Cottias Alpes." Here Trajan's words obviously end at "quinquennio" (*cf.* "redegit"), and the comment is Victor's. The provincial additions are small. The Parthian war is only just begun. To limit Trajan's praise, as does Raabe (p. 203), to foreign policy is not advisable.

Cf. Suetonius, Nero 19; Dio lxi. 4, 5, who begins the popular modern view, is surely exaggerated and untrustworthy. Modern writers —*cf.* Merivale vi. 115; Raabe 201-203; Beulé iii. 319, 320; Champagny ii. 185.

Sect. 2. *Page* 78. *Corn Supply:* Rufus: Ann. xiii. 22; xiv. 51.

Importance, etc. : Ann. xii. 43 ; xv. 18 ; Strabo. v. 3, p. 375. Edict : Ann. xiii. 51. Corner in wheat : Pliny, N. H. xxxiii. 164. Tax on provisions : Pliny, N. H. xix. 19 ; evidently removed by Nero, as had it been by Vespasian Pliny would have said so. *Cf.* Suetonius, Nero 10. Harbour at Antium : Suetonius, Nero 9. Canal from Ostia : *ib.* 16 ; from Lake Avernus—see note to chap. vii. *Cf.* Cohen, Néron, Nos. 91-93, 215-218 ; Suppl. Néron, No. 14. Coins show as many as twelve ships in the Claudian harbour. Storms : Ann. xv. 18. *Cf.* the shipwreck of the Imperial fleet off Misenum in the W.S.W. gale off Cumae in A.D. 64. xv. 46.

Page 79. *Aqueduct:* Frontinus, De Aquaed. *Cf.* Middleton, Ancient Rome, Vol. II. (ed. 1892) p. 346 ; Burn, Ancient Rome, pp. 210, 211. The Via Sublacensis to source of Aqua Claudia first paved under Nero : see Frontinus, De Aquaed. and C. I. L. iii. 34.

Page 80. *Games, etc.:* Ann. xiii. 22, 24, 25, 28, 31 ; Suetonius, Nero 26 ; Dio lxi. 8. Sumptuary Laws : Suetonius, Nero 16—the famous passage where Christians and Cook-shops are classed together. I here omit the Christians.

Sect. 3. *Page* 81. *Fiscus and Aerarium:* Ann. xiii. 28, 29, 31 ; xv. 18. *Cf.* Mommsen, St. R. Fr. Tr. v. pp. 290-305, espec. note on pp. 293-4. That xv. 18 has anything to do with the Corn Distribution (as Furneaux Note *ad loc.* after Hirschfeld) is highly improbable. And what distinction in law can be drawn between Fiscus receipts and the Emperor's "res privata" up to Septimus Severus at least? For the Commission *cf.* a similar one of Augustus ap. Dio lv. 25 and Vespasian ap. Tacitus, Hist. iv. 40, 3. Nero's finance in general : *cf.* Schiller, pp. 352-359. If Nero did give Doryphorus five million sesterces to spite Agrippina—as Dio lxi. 5—he could afford it. The tale is not probable.

Page 83. *The Free-Trade Scheme:* Ann. xiii. 50, 51. Merivale's limitations are quite unjustified, vi. pp. 109-111. Duméril, p. 285, is foolish. Duruy iv. p. 16, Schiller, pp. 347-348, Hertzberg, p. 220, Bury, p. 284, take the view with which I agree. For the Portoria, *cf.* my paper in the *Classical Review* for 1897, pp. 253-254. The "Jus Italicum" proves—as against Furneaux, p. 58—that cives were liable to Tributa as well as to Vectigalia. I accept the reading "Seniores"=the Imperial Cabinet for "Senatores" in xiii. 50, 2, as the Senate has nothing to do with the subsequent edicts issued. It is notable that Seneca is not once mentioned in connection with the scheme. Hence the favourite epithet "mad" lavished on it, I suppose. Liability to such epithets is so frequently part of the price paid by Reform to Conservatism (neither term here is used with any but a colourless connotation) that Nero's misfortune in incurring it may really be taken to prove his originality rather than any less serious crime. Attempted change in the incidence of Taxation, *cf.* Ann. xiii. 31. Unsuccessful of course as such, but=a step towards uniformity, and so not wasted. Delatores : Suetonius, Nero 10.

Page 85. *The Currency Reform:* For Bibliography, *cf.* "Coinage" in general Bibl. Pliny, N. H. xxxiii. 3, 47, is confirmed by the coins after *c.* A.D. 60. The gold coins sink to $\frac{1}{45}$ of a pound (=7.266 gr.) from $\frac{1}{40}$ (=8.185 gr.) ; the silver to $\frac{1}{98}$ of a pound (=3.41 gr.) from $\frac{1}{84}$ (=3.90 gr.). The proportion of alloy in the silver rose from 5% to 10%, so to 20% (Trajan) and 50% (Severus). Mommsen, Röm.

Munzw., pp. 756-758. But Soutzo—whose views I reproduce—seems to have proved the "formal reduction of weight" to have been a change definitely intended (which Mommsen did not hold, at least forty years ago) to bring the Roman and Greek coinage into line (ap. *Revue numismatique*, Paris, 1898, pp. 659-666; 1899, pp. 9-22). The following Table (extracted from Soutzo's elaborate statistics) illustrates this:

Roman Coin.		Value in Drachmae.	
		Claudius.	Nero.
Gold	"Quaternio"	90	80
	"Binarius"	45	40
	"Denarius" = Aureus	$22\frac{1}{2}$	20
	Quinarius	$11\frac{1}{4}$	10
Silver	Denarius	$\frac{8}{9}$	$\frac{4}{5}$
	Quinarius	$\frac{4}{9}$	$\frac{2}{5}$
	Sestertius	$\frac{2}{9}$	$\frac{1}{5}$
Bronze	Dupondius	$\frac{2}{45}$	$\frac{1}{25}$
	As	$\frac{1}{45}$	$\frac{1}{50}$

The ratio of value between the metals was thus changed:—Gold to Silver from 1 : 11.92 to 1 : 11.72; Gold to Bronze from 1 : 1666.66 to 1 : 1406.25; Silver to Bronze from 1 : 140 to 1 : 120. *Cf.* Soutzo, *op. cit.* espec. pp. 18-22. Change in type: *cf.* Gabrizi, *op. cit.* p. 297. Imperial Bronze Coinage: *cf.* Mommsen, *op. cit.* p. 745; Eckhel vi. p. 284. Schiller, p. 360, and Bury, p. 285, reproduce Mommsen's view.

Sect. 4. *Page* 88. *The Senate under Nero:* Ann. xiii. 26, 27, 34; xiv. 28 (misunderstood by Suetonius, Nero 17); Suetonius, Nero 15. Freedmen: *cf.* Ann. xiii. 26, 27, 44; xiv. 45. Senate's legislative activity: Ann. xiii. 4, 5, 49; in case of an evasion of the Lex Papia Poppaea, xv. 19: Control of Public Order in Italy: xiii. 48; xiv. 17. Control of Tribunes: xiii. 28. For a careful explanation of the "vocare ex Italia," *cf.* Greenidge, "Roman Public Life," App. ii. pp. 447-451, from whom I borrow. Tribunician Auxilium: *cf.* Hist. ii. 91; Intercessio and its dangers: Ann. xvi. 26; *cf.* vi. 47 (53); Control of Aediles: xiii. 28.

Page 89. *Elections*: *cf.* Ann. i. 15. 81 ; xiv. 28. I do not hold that "comitia praetorum" here excludes the election of consuls in the Senate. *Cf.* Velleius ii. 126 ; Tacitus, Hist. ii. 91. C. I. L. ix. 2342 seems to me decisive. Modern controversy however rages. *Cf. e.g.* Mommsen, Staatsrecht ii. 923-925 (=Fr. Tr. vi. 397-399 ; vii. 451-453) ; Mispoulet i. 267-269 ; Willems, D. P. R. p. 457 ; Greenidge, *op. cit.* pp. 349-350, 372. I cannot accept the view that the consuls were still under Nero elected in Comitia and the Emperor exercised no right of Commendatio for this office. I do not see reason in the literary authorities for stamping C. I. L. ix. 2342 as inaccurate. C. I. L. vi. 10213 will then refer to the Renuntiatio as ap. Pliny, Paneg. 77, 92, etc.

Page 90. *The Cabinet:* Ann. xiii. 27 ; xiii. 50 (reading "Seniores," *cf.* note to sect. 3) ; Suetonius, Nero 41. I regard the "consilium" of xiv. 62 as the ordinary "amici" of the paterfamilias, not the semi-political council. After Nero : *cf.* Juvenal iv. 72 ; Pliny, Ep. vi. 31. *Cf.* espec. Ed. Cuq : Mémoire sur le Consilium Principis d'Auguste à Dioclétien, ap. Mémoires présentés à L'Acad. des Inscrs. et Belles Lettres, Série I. Tome IX., Paris, 1884, pp. 311 *sqq.*

Page 94. *Murder of Pedanius:* Ann. xiv. 42-45. Nero's early clemency : Seneca De Clementia ii. 1. Seneca's language is more exaggerated here than usual. Nero's reluctance may have been but the petulance of a boy worried with State business, or in any case a young prince's natural dislike to sign his first warrant of execution. Yet "O dignam vocem," etc. etc.—yards of it ! *Cf.* Suetonius, Nero 10. Seneca on Slavery : De Beneficiis iii. 18-28 ; Epist. 47. Trimalchio : Petronius, Sat. sect. 71. *Cf.* Sen. Epist. 47. Trimalchio, as Thomas says, "simply made himself ridiculous." (L'envers de le société romaine, p. 108.) Appeal to City Prefect : Dig. i. 12. 1, sect. 1 ; Seneca, De Benef. iii. 22, where the "qui audiat"=not a special judge but the prefect. This leave to appeal was given probably by Nero, not Augustus. *Cf.* Franz Vollmann : Über das Verhältnis der Stoa zu Sklaverei, p. 43.

Sect. 5. *Page* 97. *Jurisdiction: cf.* in general such works as Mommsen, St. R. Fr. Tr. v. pp. 246-279. Greenidge, Rom. Pub. Life, pp. 381-391. Under Nero : Cases (*cf.* Furneaux notes throughout) : Proculus, Ann. xiii. 30 ; Camerinus xiii. 52, *cf.* Pliny, Ep. i. 5. 3 ; Silvanus xiii. 52 ; Blaesus xiv. 18 ; Priscus xiv. 46 ; Celer xiii. 33 ; Laenas xiii. 30 ; Marcellus xiii. 33 (reject Schiller, p. 107) ; Secundus xiv. 28 ; Capito xiii. 33 (*cf.* Schiller, p. 385) ; Paris and Domitia xiii. 27 ; Treasury suits, Suetonius, Nero 17 ; Sagitta xiii. 44, *cf.* Hist. iv. 44 ; Fabianus, etc. xiv. 40 ; Veiento xiv. 50 ; Sosianus xiv. 48, 49 : *cf.* xvi. 14 ; Piso Conspiracy evidence xv. 73 ; Nero's methods, Suetonius, Nero 15 (Suetonius, "malitiöse Bemerkung," is foolish rather than "piquant"—*cf.* Schiller, p. 360 n.) ; Ponticus xiv. 41. Flavius Sabinus as City Prefect : Tacitus, Hist. iii. 75 ; Plutarch, Otho 5. S. C. Turpilianum ; Suetonius, Nero 17; Dig. 47, 15, 7 ; 48, 16, 1, 9.

Sect. 6. *Page* 98. *Puteoli:* Ann. xiii. 48. *Pompeii v. Nuceria:* Ann. xiv. 17, and the Pompeian Graffiti—C. I. L. iv. 1293, 1329, "Nucerinis infelicia," 2183 "Puteolanis feliciter, omnibus Nucherinis felicia, et uncum Pompeianis, Pethecusanis." I take all to refer to this riot.

The Earthquake: Ann. xv. 22. Seneca, Nat. Quaest vi. 1. 1-3, 12. 3, 31. Tacitus dates it in 62, Seneca in 63. I see no reason to suppose the names of the consuls to have been interpolated in the latter; and as I connect the colony here with the earthquake, and the colony seems connected rather with A.D. 63 (see next note), I prefer Seneca's date. So do Lehmann, p. 33, and Schiller, p. 172 n.

Page 99. *The Colonies: Capua:* Ann. xiii. 31; *Nuceria:* Ann. xiii. 31; Seneca, Nat. Q. vi. 1. 2; *Puteoli:* Ann. xiv. 27; C. I. L. x. 5369—found at Coreno near Ausonia; and C. I. L. iv. 2152, a Pompeian graffito. The order of the names differs on the two inscriptions. No mention of the colony under Nero is found in the actual inscriptions of P. itself, the first such being a "Colonia Flavia Augusta P." It changed its title after the damnatio memoriae of Nero. *Tarentum:* Ann. xiv. 27; *Antium:* Ann. xiv. 27; C. I. L. x. 6672—of a veteran of Coh. I. Classic. C. I. L. iii. p. 845 (sometimes quoted in this connection) is only an ordinary military diploma of Nero's time of A.D. 60 found at Vienna, and is here quite off the point. These five colonies are thus all known from Tacitus. But the other two, viz. *Pompeii* and *Tegeanum*, are known to have been colonies under Nero and by his decision only since 1897, when an Inscription painted in red letters was found in the Domus Vettiorum at Pompeii, viz.: "Iudicis Aug. felic. Puteolos Antium Tegeano Pompeios. Hae sunt verae coloniae." Another Pompeian graffito runs "Judicis Augusti p. p. et Poppææ Augustae feliciter." The mention of Poppæa and as Augusta proves Augustus = Nero, and dates the inscription after Jan. A.D. 63 (see below cap. 4, sect. 9). The date will not apply to Puteoli and Antium, but to the other two, and I therefore propose to connect the colony at Pompeii with the earthquake. Other allusions to the "judgment" of Nero, *i.e.* the grant of the "jus et cognomentum coloniae," *not* to the Nuceria quarrel (which went against Pompeii), are in C. I. L. iv. 670-1, 1813, and ? 1185. *Tegeanum: i.e.* = the "Ad Teglanum" of the Peutinger Table on Via Popillia = modern Palma. There is a Tegianum in Lucania (modern Diano) to which the inscriptions C. I. L. x. 3704 (at Naples) and x. 482 (at Paestum) have hitherto been referred. Both of these, in view of their provenance, probably refer to the Campanian town. "Ad Teglanum" should thus be corrected to "Ad Tegeanum."

Cf. a very good paper by *A. Sogliano*, "Colonie Neroniane," ap. Rendiconti della r. Accad. dei Lincei. Roma. Serie v. vol. vi Fasc. 9, 10, 1897, pp. 389-395—to which I owe most of the above.

Beneventum, Aesernia, Atina, Saepinum, Castrimoenium all colonies of Nero according to the Liber Coloniarum—ap. Lachmann, Gromatici Veteres—and so accepted by Zumpt, ap. Comm. Epig. Berlin, 1850, p. 392. But this is disproved in each one's case respectively by C. I. L. ix. p. 136; ix. p. 245; x. p. 499; ix. p. 227; xiv. 2460. *Cf.* Mommsen *ad loc.*

Italian infecunditas: Ann. xii. 43.

Page 100. *Maritime Alps:* Ann. xv. 32; *Coast Road:* C. I. L. xii. 5459, 5469, 5471-75; *Cottian Alps:* Suetonius, Nero 18; Vopiscus. Vit. Aurel. 21. 10, 11. *Cf.* Schiller, p. 172 n.

Sect. 7. *Page* 102. Edict of A.D. 57; Ann. xiii. 31; S. C. of 62; Ann. xv. 20-22; *cf.* Dio lvi. 25; Thrasea: Ann. xv. 20-22; *cf.* Schiller, p. 674, 675, with whom here I fully agree.

Page 103. *Provincial Accusations, etc.:* Laenas: Ann. xiii. 30; Capito: Ann. xiii. 33, *cf.* Schiller, p. 385; Blaesus: Ann. xiv. 18; Secundus: Ann. xiv. 28; Priscus: Ann. xiv. 46; Saevinus (Priscus ?): Hist. i. 77; ii. 10; Proculus: Ann. xiii. 30; Marcellus: Ann. xiii. 33; Camerinus: Ann. xiii. 52; Silvanus: *ib.*; Strabo: Ann. xiv. 18; Celer: Ann. xiii. 33; Quirinalis: Ann. xiii. 30. *Latifundia in Africa:* Pliny, N. H. 18. 35; *Rhodes:* Inscr. ap Mitth. d. deut. Arch. Inst. in Athen., vol. xx. 1895, pp. 386-395—ed. by F. Hiller von Gaertringen. Comm. by Mommsen. *Cf.* Fabia, Rev. de Phil. xx. 1896. pp. 137-143. I follow F. and Wilamowitz in my view of the ψεῦδος here. The wrong description of Nero is probably a graver's error. *Roads:* Bithynia, C. I. L. iii. 346; Thrace, C. I. L. iii. 6123=L'Année Epig. 1891, No. 18. *Appointments:* Balbillus: Ann. xiii. 22, *cf.* Seneca, Nat. Quaest. iv. 2. 14. C. I. G. 4699; Galba: Plutarch, Galba 3; Suetonius, Galba 9; Otho: Ann. xiii. 46. *Cf. infra* cap. 4, § 1, pp. 116-117; Anteius: Ann. xiii. 22, *cf.* xvi. 14; *The Publicani:* Ann. xiii. 51. *Cf. supra* § 3, pp. 81-83. *Peace:* Thus in Spain the three legions of A.D. 23 are reduced to 2 by 54 and 1 by A.D. 66. Earthquake at Laodicea in A.D. 60, Colossae, and Hierapolis; *cf.* Ann. xiv. 27; Orosius vii. 7; Colossae never recovered. The Epistle to the Colossians being A.D. 62, the earthquake was probably later. But Renan (p. 337, *cf.* p. 99) thinks it that of A.D. 60.

Seneca's amusing tale of the Dolphins and the Crocodiles may perhaps be repeated here. "Balbillus, an excellent man and versed in all rare literature, states that when he was prefect of Egypt he once saw in the Heracleotic mouth of the Nile a school of dolphins advancing up from the sea, against which was moving a band of crocodiles intent on battle. The gentle and harmless dolphins actually got the better of the fray. For though the backs of the crocodiles are impervious to the teeth of even greater animals, yet their bellies underneath are soft and tender. The dolphins then dived beneath the surface and ran the quills which they have projecting from their backs into the crocodiles' bellies, wounded them, and slit them up. And when many of the crocodiles had been sliced in this way, the rest turned and fled up the river."

Sect. 8. *Page* 109. *Seneca and Suillius:* Ann. xiii. 42-43. I take the fierce attack in Dio lxi. 10, lxii. 1 to represent Suillius' reproaches. The echo in Seneca, De Vita Beata and De Constantia Sapientis, is so strong that without hesitation I follow Martens, Lehmann, and Heikel, in ascribing both of these to A.D. 58. *De Const. Sap.* Dedicated to Serenus. I quote from it *passim*, but *cf.* espec. cap. 1-4, 7, 10-13, 15, 19. *De Vita Beata.* Dedicated to his brother Gallio. Here I employ the second part only, viz. cap. 17-28, the first half being a sermon with the conclusion "Ergo in virtute posita est vera felicitas," the second an answer to the charge "aliter loqueris, aliter vivis." It is an even more untidy treatise than most. *Philosophy and Wealth: cf.* also Ad Helviam v. xiii; Ad Marciam x; De Ira iii. 33; Ad Polyb. ix; Epist. 2, 4, 5, 17, 18, 20, etc.

CHAPTER IV

Sect. 1. *Page* 114. *Cf.* Seneca, De Vita Beata (A.D. 58)—cap. 1-10.

Page 115. *Nero's revels:* Ann. xiii. 25; Suetonius, Nero 26; Dio lxi. 9; Pliny, N. H. xiii. 126. *Sulla*: Ann. xiii. 23; xiii. 47, *cf.* xiv. 57.

Page 116. *Poppaea Sabina:* Ann. xiii. 45; vi. 39; xi. 1-4; Pliny, N. H. 11. 238; 33. 140; 37. 50; Dio lxii. 28; Juvenal vi. 465; The Octavia v. 566 *sqq.* P. and "Mathematici"—Tacitus, Hist. i. 22, *cf.* Plutarch, Galba 23. P. and Jews: Josephus calls her θεοσεβής, ap. Antiq. xx. 8, 11. She twice favours the Jews (*ib.* and Josephus, Vita, § 3). The Jewish dancer Aliturus was a favourite of hers [but also of Nero] (Jos. Vita, § 3). Her body was embalmed "regum externorum consuetudine," not burned. (Ann. xvi. 6.) This is all the evidence on which *e.g.* Duruy, Lightfoot ("Philippians," p. 5), Keim (*op. cit.* p. 188), Allard (*op. cit.* p. 6) believe she became a Jewish proselyte. Raabe, p. 267, actually makes her become a Christian at the end of her life—I cannot conceive on what grounds. Schiller, p. 314, thinks Josephus would have been more precise had she actually become a proselyte. Surely also Tacitus would have known it. Merivale (vi. p. 260) here as often takes the sane well-balanced view. Fabia devotes several papers to her (*cf.* General Bibliography); F. on her "eclectic religiosity," ap. Revue de Phil. 1897, p. 227. The evidence for actual proselytism is not convincing. Doubtless there was little but the "fashionable inclination" to patronise the Jewish ceremonies, of which Merivale speaks. Poppaea "Dévote et voluptueuse" (Renan); "The intriguer, the wit, the devotee, and the fatalist" (Furneaux); "Ambitieuse et hypocrite" (Fabia), etc. etc. Ollius died *c.* 32 A.D., which makes her some years older than Nero, whose youthful adoration of her is thus all the more easily intelligible. Otho, the "Roman Paris, husband of the fair haired Helen," is Plutarch's comparison (Galba 19).

Page 117. Otho: *cf.* Pliny, N. H. 13, 22; Plutarch, Galba, 19, 20.

Otho, Poppaea, and Nero. Several different versions were current of the whole intrigue. Perhaps inquiry into them is not very profitable. At least it may be brief. The version I follow is that of Tacitus, Ann. xiii. 45, 46—but that Otho acted "amore incautus" and not of ambition which overreached itself (Tacitus suggests but does not decide between the alternatives) I take to be shown by Tacitus, Hist. i. 78—"ne tum quidem immemor amorum"—and by his quick adhesion to Galba. The rival version in Dio lxi. 11, Suetonius, Otho 3, Plutarch, Galba 19, and especially Tacitus, Histories i. 13, represents Nero as using Otho from the first to cover his own intrigue with Crispinus' wife until unluckily Otho had the temerity to fall in love with her whom to suit Nero he had made his own wife, and was duly punished for it. This is Tacitus' early view. His later view in the Annals takes no notice at all of his earlier published version, a silence variously explained to-day either by his forgetfulness, or by his conscious rejection of the tale upon a closer study of his authorities. These are generally supposed to be Pliny for the second and Cluvius for the first version (*cf.* Appendix A). Schiller with less probability reverses the ascription. There is too strong a flavour of the Serenus-Acte intrigue about the earlier version to satisfy me, and besides Tacitus' later view should claim precedence over his earlier. But we cannot decide for it on Fabia's ground that Cluvius is better authority than Pliny, so long as the usual ascription, even if probable, is challenged. *Cf.* Fabia, Rev. de Phil. 1896, pp. 12-22; *ib.* "Sources," pp. 390-392; Callegari, *op. cit.* pp. 168-169; Schiller, pp. 15, 16.

Seneca and Otho: ap. Plutarch, *loc. cit.*

Page 118. I must here refer the more curious reader to Tacitus, Ann. xiv. 1-3, and Suetonius, Nero 28. Dio lxi. 11, 12, hardly saves the

situation, even at Seneca's expense. Nothing in Agrippina's past life gives the lie to Cluvius' view, which is also Tacitus'. We cannot get beyond it, and must believe that they believed it of reason. But if we refuse final justification on any grounds to a mother's slaying, we may leave the whole tale alone.

Sect. 2. *Page* 118. Tacitus, Ann. xiv. 3, believes Agrippina had fortified herself against the risk of poison by antidotes. Suetonius, Nero 34, invents actual attempts at poison frustrated by the antidotes. G. H. L[ewes] in the *Cornhill* for 1863 pours lively scorn on the whole ancient theory of universal antidotes (pp. 120, 121). Dr Fountain follows him. "We might as well believe in an elixir of life" (p. 25). Raabe's attempted defence (pp. 140, 141) is laboured and Suetonius' story at least is certainly not worth all his trouble. Later too he practically abandons the attempt (p. 210). The firm belief of all ages up to the present in the efficacy of antidotes is curious (*cf.* Stahr, pp. 250-252) but we have not grounds enough to accept it as true, and I therefore omit the whole in the text.

Page 119. Seneca on Baiae, etc. Epist. 51, 53. Pity so large a pill must be beneath the sugar in Ep. 53. It betrays a lack of humour.

Page 119. *The Death of Agrippina*, etc.: Ann. xiv. 1-13; Dio lxi. 11-16; Suetonius, Nero 34. That Seneca and Burrus were ignorant of the scheme is practically beyond doubt, despite Tacitus' "incertum an." Its folly and their sleep may prove it. So practically all our modern writers (as *e.g.* Furneaux, p. 64; Raabe, pp. 222, 223; Beulé, p. 348; Latour St Ybars ii. c. 7; Martha, "Les Moralistes sous l'Empire," p. 110 n.), who accept the main outlines of the story. Beulé's eloquence is refreshing. Fabia, Rev. de Phil. 1897, p. 232, is justly severe on S. and B.'s opportunism, if they had had any choice. I fail to see it else, though doubtless it "had been well for the integrity of their glory had they died before Agrippina." But what would Fabia have done in Burrus' place when roused from sleep on the night of the murder? At that point in the proceedings surely either Nero or Agrippina must be slain. This of course does not diminish the responsibility of those who brought proceedings to that point. The whole ancient story is dismissed by, *e.g.*, Reinhold, Hochart—at enormous length—pp. 145-282, G. H. L. *op. cit.* p. 123. It is of course very easy to pick holes in the evidence here, as in the Britannicus' murder story. Voltaire here leads the way. But the alternative view that A.'s plot to assassinate Nero *was* genuine, and that the shipwreck was a genuine accident—and "on such a night"—is not attractive enough. This official version—doubtless largely believed in Rome (*cf.* Schiller, pp. 128, 129)—is the more easily invented, and again we have no reason for rejecting the unanimous ancient evidence, when we have nothing so good to put in its place.

Dio, of course, embroiders and exaggerates and is no safe guide: as *e.g.* on Thrasea lxi. 15. *Cf.* Schiller, p. 672. I borrow little from him.

Page 123. As *e.g.* Tacitus' of "dissimulation" or Wiedemeister's of "incipient madness."

Page 123. Farrar, "Seekers after God," p. 141: "In composing this shameful document Seneca reached the nadir of his moral degradation." A little flamboyant?

Page 124. Quintilian, Inst. Or. viii. 5, 18.

Page 124. The precise dates throughout are derived from the Acta Fratrum Arvalium ed. Henzen, pp. lxxiv., lxxv., and 77, 78.

Page 124. Quintilian, Inst. Or. viii. 5, 16.

Page 125. *e.g.* Junia (*cf.* p. 14 *supra*), Calpurnia, Valerius Capito, Licinius Gabolus. So Lollia Paulina's ashes are brought back to Rome (*cf.* p. 12 *supra*).

Sect. 3. *Page* 128. *Nero and the Circus, etc.* Ann. xiii. 3; xiv. 14; Suetonius, Nero 22; Dio lxi. 6; Pliny, N. H. 28. 238; 33. 90; Juvenal, xi. 187-201; *cf.* Suetonius, Calig. 55. With a curious difference from English use, the "Green" = Spring, Red = Summer, Blue = Winter, White = Autumn, according to Cassiodorus, Ep. iii. 51. The obelisk: *cf.* Pliny, N. H. 36. 74; Suetonius, Claud. 21. Removed by Sixtus V. to its present position, with great solemnity.

Page 130. *The Games:* of A.D. 57. Ann. xiii. 31; Suetonius, Nero 11; Dio lxi. 9. *The amphitheatre:* Tacitus *loc. cit.*; Pliny, N. H. 19. 24; *cf.* Middleton, "Ancient Rome" ii. 78. In general: Ann. xiv. 14; xv. 46; Dio lxi. 9, 17; Suetonius *loc. cit.*; Calpurnius, Eclog. vii. 65-68; Pliny, N. H. 8. 22. *Amber:* Pliny, N. H. 37. 45; Solinus, Collect. 20. 11; *Nero's "Smaragdus"*; Pliny, N. H. 37. 64. But Middleton (Anc. Gems, p. 134) judges it from the context to have been "not a lens to look through, but a mirror." This is hardly conceivable. *Echion.:* Petronius, Sat., sect. 45. *Seneca:* Epist. 7. (In the sentence "eum docetis esse crudelem qui non potest discere," I cannot think Nero is referred to. Surely it is Seneca himself.) Epist. 95. 33. *Nero's view:* "Munere . . . neminem occidit, ne noxiorum quidem," ap. Suetonius *loc. cit.* *Cf.* Ann. xiii. 5 and Schiller, pp. 542-543. *Cf.* also Seneca's "Casu in meridianum spectaculum incidi, lusus expectans," Epist. 7 and Nero's Hellenism. I paraphrase and abbreviate Seneca freely.

Page 131. *Ludi Juvenalium,* etc.: Ann. xiv. 15; Dio lxi. 19-21; Suetonius, Nero 12; Pliny, N. H. 37. 19. Burrus "maerens ac laudans" ap. Tacitus *loc. cit.*, "disguising the sob of shame with ejaculations of applause" (Merivale). Nerva: Martial, Epig. ix. 26. *Cf. ib.* viii. 70. Pliny, Ep. v. 3, 5. He belonged to the Imperial Salon. Valens: Tacitus, Hist. iii. 62. Thrasea: Ann. xvi. 21. *Augustiani:* Suetonius, Nero 20 = the Collegia Juvenum of Dig. 48. 28. 3, *cf.* Liebenam. Rom. Ver. pp. 34-35. *The "Neronia":* Ann. xiv. 20, 21; Suetonius, Nero 12. *Gymnasium:* Ann. xiv. 47, xv. 22; Philostratus, Vit. Apoll. iv. 42. *Thermae:* Suetonius, Nero 12: Seneca, Epist. 86; Martial, Epig. ii. 48; vii. 34; x. 48; Statius, Silvae i. 5. 60-62; restored by Severus Alexander and called the Thermae Alexandrinae *c.* A.D. 229 — *cf.* Eutropius vii. 15; Middleton, Ancient Rome ii. 144-5; Lanciani, Ruins and Excav. p. 501.

Page 133. Roman dislike of Nero's performances, etc.: *cf.* Ann. xiv. 14; Juvenal viii. 198, 220-230; Dio lxi. 20. *Cf.* attitude to stage of Caesar, ap. Suetonius, Julius 39; Augustus, ap. *ib.* Aug. 43; Tiberius, *ib.* Tib. 35; Caligula, ap. Dio lix. 10. 13; and Claudius, ap. Dio lx. 7. *Cf.* Duruy, iv. p. 25. G. H. L. *loc. cit.* pp. 125-127. Tesserae frumentariae, etc.; Suetonius, Nero 11: Dio lxi. 18 = the second Congiarium of A.D. 60 celebrated on Nero's coins. *Cf.* Gabrizi, *op. cit.* p. 324. Nero's poetry: *cf. infra,* chap. vii. § 1.

Sect. 4. *Page* 135. Ann. xiv. 22; Frontinus, De Aqued. 93; *The*

comet: Tacitus *loc. cit.*; Seneca, Nat. Quæst. vii. 17. 2, "cometis detraxit infamiam"; vii. 21. 3; Pliny, N. H. ii. 92 "adsiduum prope ac saevum": the "Octavia" v. 231 *sq.*

> "En ipse diro spiritu saevi ducis
> Polluitur aether, gentibus clades novas
> Minantur astra, quas regit dux impius," etc. etc.

Sect. 5. *Page* 135. *Burrus' death:* Ann. xiv. 51; Suetonius, Nero 35; Dio lxii. 13. Despite the two latter his supposed poisoning is *not* "infiniment probable," as Fabia, with poor judgment (Rev. de Phil. 1897, p. 236), and even Mayor (ad Juv. i. 70).

Page 136. *Tigellinus:* Ann. xiv. 51; Hist. i. 72; Dio lix. 23; lx. 4; lxii. 13, 27, 28; Plutarch, Galba 17; Philostratus, Vit. Apoll. iv. 44. *Cf.* Juvenal i. 155-157 and Mayor *ad loc.* T. never had a reputation to lose, which saves trouble. "Ein echter Bluthund" (Hertzberg, p. 240). His career explains his character. All agree unanimously (!) that he was Nero's bad angel or chief Fury (Renan). Even an advocate with a novelist's imagination and without a vestige of a historic scruple could do little with such a client.

Sect. 6. *Page* 137. *Seneca's retirement:* Ann. xiv. 52-56; Suetonius, Nero 35. Merivale vi. p. 148 n., believes the Seneca-Nero interview a fictitious one invented by Tacitus, "our dramatic fabulist." Raabe, pp. 277-284, vigorously denies this, as does Diepenbrock, p. 170. There is no possible means of decision.

Page 142. This section is based upon Seneca's writings, viz.: especially De Tranquillitate Animi—to Serenus—probable date A.D. 62, as Martens—especially c. ii.

De Brevitate Vitae—to Paulinus—date A.D. 49—*passim.*

De Otio—to Serenus—date *c.* A.D. 64—probably his last formal treatise. Zeno's rule is quoted here in c. 3.

Epist. ad Lucilium—Nos. 8, 14, and 20.

I have been compelled at times to compress pages into a sentence. At times I have been able to translate verbatim. I hope I have done Seneca no wrong in this.

Sect. 7. *Page* 143. *Sulla:* Ann. xiv. 57; Dio lx. 30. *Plautus*: Ann. xiv. 57-59. Juvenal, viii. 39 *sqq.*, has a much less ideal picture of him, and Tacitus may be heightening the contrast between him and Nero for effect. But Juvenal in calling him a proud degenerate idler forgets the impossibility of his taking part in public life. *Cf.* Wollfgramm, Fritz. "Rub. Plautus und seine Beurtheilung bei Tacitus und Juvenal. Prenzlau, 1871, p. 36. Antistia cherishes his memory: Ann. xvi. 10. *Musonius Rufus: cf.* Ann. xv. 71; Hist. iii. 81; Schiller, pp. 691-693. *The S. C.:* Schiller, p. 164, suggests this was a mere "Damnatio memoriae." Tacitus is not of this opinion. For Tigellinus' activity: *cf.* Schiller, p. 361; Duruy iv. p. 27.

Sect. 8. *Page* 148. *Death of Octavia:* Ann. xiv. 60-64; Dio lxii. 13; Suetonius, Nero 35, 57. Pythias' answer to Tigellinus is untranslatable. Neither Fabia's suggestions (*e.g.* ap. Rev. de Phil. 1897, p. 238) or Schiller's criticisms (p. 168 n.) are convincing. Her memory perished

out of Rome after Hadrian. *Cf.* Nordmeyer, De Oct. fabula, cap. 6. Her head is found on coins of Corinth, Teos, Alexandria, Sardis, Sinope —usually with Nero's.

Sect. 9. *Page* 149. *Poppaea and Claudia:* Ann. xv. 23; Acta Fr. Arval. ed. Henzen. lxxviii., lxxix.; Suetonius, Nero 35; Ann. xvi. 6. Deification: Dio lxiii. 26; Acta Fr. Arv. lxxxii.; C. I. L. vi. 2044; xi. 1331. Funeral: *cf.* Pliny, N. H. xii. 83. Nero's grief: *cf.* Dio Chrys. Orat. xxi. Cause of death: I am rather inclined to follow Sievers than Fabia (Rev. Phil. 1898, pp. 342-343)—as the silence in the "Octavia" v. 712 *sqq.* about Nero's supposed brutality is not a bad argument. Renan holds Nero's love was returned by P. Fabia *loc. cit.* denies it. Both accept her fidelity—in contrast to the imagination of religious novelists. Coins frequent—*e.g.* of Iconium, "P. Sebaste" (Cat. Gk. coins in B. M. Lycaonia, p. 4); Ilium; Alexandria; Perinthus; Ephesus; Smyrna—one with P. as Nike (*ib.* "Ionia," p. 271); etc. *Cf.* too Eckhel. vi. p. 287.

Statilia Messalina: Ann. xv. 68; Suetonius, Nero 35, Otho 10; Juvenal, Sat. vi. 434 *sqq.*, according to the Scholiast *ad loc.* Date of marriage proved by coins of Ephesus, on one of which her name and head appear with name of M'. Acilius Aviola. A similar coin with Aviola's name has Poppaea's head. Aviola was proconsul of Asia in A.D. 65-66, and as Tacitus never mentions Messalina as Nero's wife, the marriage must have been in 66. So Act. Arval. lxxxiii., "Junoni Messallinae," and ? lxxxiv. *Cf.* also Inscr. Pelop. i. 1402—of Epidaurus. Her head also on coin of Thyatira. *Cf.* Eckhel vi. pp. 287-8; Visconti, Plate xxx. No. 9; Cat. Gk. Inscr. "Ionia," p. 74. And for the question of her father, Ann. xii. 59; Fabia, Rev. de Phil. 1895, pp. 221-2; Prosop. Imp. Rom. iii. pp. 264, 266, 267. Otho intended to marry her.—*cf.* Suetonius *loc cit.*

CHAPTER V

Armenia: For this chapter—see Authorities, ap. Gen. Bibliog. My own papers in the *Classical Review*, April—June 1901, and *Journal of Philology*, vol. xxviii., present at length the evidence for many of the conclusions contained in this chapter, evidence too intricate to be repeated here. Throughout I quote none of the stock histories, which add nothing to Tacitus, and are peculiarly unilluminative of events.

Sect. 1. *Page* 162. My obligations to Hamley's "Operations of War" for general principles are obvious. I think it is justifiable to apply them to this portion of Roman History: *e.g.* I think Prof. Bury's criticism on Hadrian loses sight of strategic necessities.

For the history of A.D. 51-54 the ancient authority is Tacitus, Ann. xii. 44-51.

Gorneae (Ann. xii. 45, 3) = Bash Garni by Artaxata: evidently so placed to be within reach of the Capital.

Sect. 2. *Page* 165. *Corbulo:* A famous difficulty exists as to his age. Tacitus, Ann. iii. 31, mentions a Domitius Corbulo "praetura functus," who in A.D. 21 quarrelled with a "Juvenis" Sulla on a question of precedence at the games. "Pro Corbulone aetas patrius mos studia seniorum erant." This C. must have been over 30 as ex-praetor, and the "aetas"

and "stud. sen." suggest inevitably a much greater age, even though the contrast is only with a "Juvenis."

Dio, however, lix. 15, lx. 17, identifies him with Nero's Corbulo. The difficulty is that if so at the lowest possible computation Corbulo must have been 64 years old when sent to the Armenian War, and all but 70 when he made his famous march to Tigranocerta in A.D. 59. No Englishman to-day can expect that every famous and victorious general must be under sixty. But in C.'s case we note that Tacitus nowhere comments on his age, always depicts him as vigorous and untiring, and, further, Roman custom viewed a man past sixty as past military age. Yet on Dio's hypothesis it is not till C. is past sixty that he is called from a period of seven years' peace to the most arduous of all military campaigns. And for myself I feel strongly (i) that Ann. iii. 31 implies a man much nearer 50 than 30; (ii) that the famous Corbulo portrait, of whose genuineness there cannot be much doubt, does *not* depict a man "qui s'affaisse sous le poids de l'âge" as Visconti thinks. If so Nero's C. must be the son of the C. of Ann. iii. 31.

The matter is further complicated by Pliny, N. H. vii. 5. 39, who, speaking of Corbulo's mother Vestilia, says she had three husbands, viz., C. Herdicius, Pomponius and Orfitus. This is a difficulty to either the one or the two Corbulos, and is no real argument in favour of Dio's theory. It is more probable that there is a MS. error (*e.g.* "Herdicius" for "Domitius," as Lehmann) than that C. was a mere nickname and son of Pomponius (as Wolffgramm). With hesitation, therefore, I adopt the view that Nero's Corbulo was son of the C. of Tiberius' reign. As cos. in A.D. 39 he would be about 50 in A.D. 54. This view is taken by Bernoulli (Röm. Ikon. i. p. 271 n.), Furneaux (Note ad Ann. iii. 31 and xi. 18), Nipperdey, Merivale, and Dessau (ap. Pros. Imp. Rom.); the opposite by Wolffgramm (Cn. Domitius Corbulo, 4° Prenzlau, 1874); Visconti (Icon. Rom. i. p. 213), Lehmann (pp. 216-7), and Baring-Gould, ii. pp. 243-4. For his early career *cf.* above reff. and Seneca, De Const. Sap. 17. 2.

The Corbulo Portrait: See Plate; portrait of bust now in the Capitoline Museum at Rome (Room of Philosophers, No. 48) once labelled "Brutus," and akin to bust and head of statue found at Gabii in 1792 during Prince Borghese's excavations in a shrine dedicated to the memory of Corbulo's daughter Domitia, *c.* A.D. 140, and now in the Louvre. The ascription to "Brutus" is, of course, the absurd product of a time knowing little Roman history and hence of ignorant admiration of the assassin. I cannot think the bust a "thinker" rather than a "soldier" myself. *Cf.* Bernoulli and Visconti, *locc. citt.* For Domitia *cf.* C. I. L. xiv. 2795.

Page 167. *Corbulo's winter camp:* Undoubtedly in Armenia, as it was in hostile territory—Ann. xiii. 36. If so the Erzerûm plateau is the obvious site, as explained in the text. This is, however, confirmed by Pliny, N. H. v. 83, who quotes Corbulo for the source of the Euphrates (=the Kara Su) in "Caranitis"—and the plateau still to-day is called Garin. Neither was Corbulo ever again in this district to obtain this information. The plateau is headquarters both of the Araxes and of the Kara Su, and measures some 18 × 10 miles. Snow may fall in June and frosts begin in September. "The principal artery of traffic in Turkish Armenia," as Lynch calls it, passes through it and always has done so, from Trebizond to Tabriz and Persia. Hence Erzerûm is the chief strategic post of all Northern Armenia, and was the Turkish army

headquarters of operations in the war of 1877-8, as it will be in the next Russo-Turkish war.

Page 168. *Preliminaries of warfare*: Ann. xiii. 6-9; 34-36. Frontinus, Strateg. iv. 1. 21; 1. 28; 2. 3: "De effectu disciplinae."

Sect. 3. *Page* 170. *Campaign of* A.D. 58: Ann. xiii. 37, 38. The Hyrcanian Revolt: Ann. xiv. 25. Merivale, c. 55, p. 336, thinks it actually due to Corbulo, "so far-reaching was the machinery put in motion by Corbulo," etc. They send envoys to Rome for help on the ground of the service their revolt rendered to the Romans. This is undoubted, but scarcely is enough to prove that Corbulo's orders reached as far as the Caspian.

Sect. 4. *Page* 170. *Trapezus:* So this naval arsenal was the base of, and connected by the great military road with, the camps of Samosata, Melitene and Satala, under Trajan. And Trebizond was the Turkish base in the war of 1877-78 for the army headquarters at Erzerûm.

Artaxata: Strabo xi. 14. 6. The ruins of Ardashad are some distance from the river, which may have changed its course. A. was the old, as Tigranocerta the new, capital of Armenia in Roman times.

Page 171. *The Two Routes:* Route 1: Modern distances (riding), Erzerûm—Alashkert plain 25 hours—Bayezid 23—Igdir 17; total 65. Route 2: some 15 to 20 hours longer. There is no practicable way down the Araxes itself. Both routes were used by the Russians in their disastrous advance against the Turks in 1877. *Volandum*, mentioned only by Tacitus, Ann. xiii. 39, certainly = Strabo's Olane xi. 14. 6—near Artaxata on the right bank of the Araxes, and the identification on strategic grounds with Igdir, the seat of the Russian garrison and governor of the district, seems to me justified. Artaxata was NOT captured on April 30th (see subsequent note). If we could believe this, as Egli does, this *ipso facto* puts the N. route out of the question, as Corbulo must else have wintered E. of the Soganli Dagh, out of reach of his supplies from Trapezus. But, even without this, there can be little doubt of his choice of the S. route.

Page 174. This whole section depends on the site selected for *Tigranocerta.* I have discussed the problem at length elsewhere, in the *Journal of Philology*, vol. 28, pages 99-121, and must here avail myself, without further discussion, of my conclusions in that paper. No modern geographer however, I believe, after inquiry, would refuse to adopt Tel Ermen in preference to its rivals Sert and Diarbekr. I can feel no doubt at all. *Corbulo's motives:* Ann. xiii. 41. 3, xiv. 23. 1. For the *risk of the march cf. e.g.* that of Blenker's Division from Alexandria to Petersburg in April 1862, which in the easiest of countries, without an enemy, never more than 30 miles from a railway, took 41 days to cover *c.* 165 miles, and arrived with 7000 out of 10,000 fit for duty!

Page 175. "*The Miraculum*" *at Artaxata:* Identified by Egli with the eclipse of the sun of April 30, A.D. 59, which Corbulo saw in Armenia, according to Pliny, N. H. ii. 70, 180. The identification is impossible. Not only could Corbulo scarcely have reached the city so soon, but the description of the miraculum in Tacitus, Ann. xiii. 41. 4, is inconsistent with any possible effect of an eclipse, however partial. And to go on to accuse Corbulo of not knowing an eclipse when he saw it, and thus describing it wrongly, is a perversely topsy-turvy argument. Egli has

jumped very hastily into a very big ditch. *Cf.* my article in the *Classical Review* for May 1901, page 208.

Page 176. *Corbulo's Route:* Tacitus xiv. 23-24 gives 2 data: i. The "Mardi," ii. "Regio Taurauniticum." i. The Mardi were a wandering tribe; but every notice of them—as in Strabo xi. 13. 6, and Ptolemy v. 12—place them to the E. and S.E. of Lake Van. ii. Those who wrongly placed Tigranocerta at Sert found the name of the region which was "not far from the city" in the old local name Daron or Taron for the plain of Mush. But the city being placed at Tel Ermen, the name= more naturally "Taurus Dwellers," *i.e.* on Mt. Masius, to-day the *Tôr* Abdin (Tôr=Mountain), and its inhabitants the Tôrâni. The region is thus that of the Mardin pass, and nothing to do with Mush. Hence, i. takes Corbulo E. of the Lake, and ii. is not opposed to this. This is 56 hours' ride instead of 70 by the western route, but according to Lynch, ii. p. 117, it is rough going round the S. of the lake.

Page 177. *Campaign of* A.D. 59: Ann. xiii. 39-41; xiv. 23-25. Frontinus, Strateg. ii. 9, 5. That all these events belong to this year I have tried to show at length in the *Classical Review* for May 1901, pp. 204-213, and the curious reader may be referred to this. Corbulo certainly did *not* winter in Artaxata.

Sect. 5. *Page* 179. *Year* A.D. 60: Ann. xiv. 26.

Page 181. *Tigranes and Corbulo, etc.:* Ann. xv. 1-3. *Vettius Bolanus:* Statius, Silvae v. 2, 31 *sqq.* *The Divided Command.* Much nonsense has been written on this even by good writers who shut their eyes to the military aspect of the situation; *e.g.*, Rawlinson, c. 16, pp. 274-6, maintains that Corbulo asked for it because he feared to provoke Nero's jealousy if he retained the whole command, although he knew that the Roman interest would suffer by it! Even Merivale, who concedes without explaining its military necessity, harps on this same silly string of Nero's envy and jealousy of Corbulo. No part of Nero's principate has been treated more unintelligently than the Armenian wars. The Divided Command in the N. of Cape Colony in the recent war is of course an entirely different story, as each general considered himself bound to act on the offensive.

Page 183. *Year* A.D. 61: Ann. xv. 1-6. *The Armistice*: Ann. xv. 6. 2. Note the past tense of "hibernavisse." *Corbulo's Reasons*: that suggested in Tacitus' account "*dilata* prorsus arma," etc., condemns itself by its inherent absurdity and the whole course of events. *Paetus:* It has been suggested that Tacitus is unfair to Paetus, to illumine Corbulo's glory thereby, as shown by Vespasian's subsequent use of him as legate of Syria (in 73 A.D., ap. Josephus. B. J. vii. 7. 1). From this view I am compelled entirely to dissent, *not* by any prejudice in favour of Tacitus' views in general (as I fear may have already become apparent in this chapter), but because a close and rigorous study of the independent topographical evidence and all strategic and tactical principles of warfare confirm Tacitus and compel the view expressed at the close of this section. As for Vespasian, Liebenam (Forsch. zur Verwalt. des röm. Kaiserreiches) holds this Paetus to have been son of Nero's general, who had served under Corbulo as Tribune (Ann. xv. 28) and so the solitary argument in the general's favour disappears. See at length my paper in the *Journal of Philology*, vol. xxviii., pages 271-286.

Sect. 6. *Page* 184. *Geography:* Authorities: (1) Ancient: Tacitus, Ann.

xv. 7-17 ; Dio lxii. 21—here unwontedly useful ; Polybius viii. 23 (25), 1 ; Ptolemy v. 13, p. 135 ; Plutarch, Lucullus, c. 31 ; Strabo, p. 529 ; Pliny, N. H. vi. 9. 26 ; 27. 128 ; v. 24. 83-84. (2) Modern : *cf.* Gen. Bibliog. but, in particular J. G. Anderson, "Road System of E. Asia Minor," ap. Journ. Hellen. Studies, xvii. (1897) p. 25 ; H. F. Tozer, "Turkish Armenia," pp. 244 *sqq.* ; Wünsch, Der See Gölldschik, ap. Mitth. der K. K. geog. Gesell. in Wien. 1885, xxviii. pp. 1-21 ; J. H. Mordtmann, ap. Hermes xv. pp. 292-3 ; Sir C. Wilson in Murray's Handbook, pp. 243, 265, etc. I am indebted to Mr Felix Oswald, Mr Lynch's companion, for some help kindly volunteered to a stranger in the British Museum Reading Room one afternoon at the beginning of 1901. The whole section is based on the geography. *Cf.* a longer discussion of the controversies raised (here I have space only for my conclusions) in my paper already mentioned. That Rhandeia lay north of the Murad I take Tacitus and Dio to prove conclusively.

Page 185. Mommsen believes Paetus reached Tigranocerta. Tacitus does nôt say so. And if he did, why in the name of wonder did he not stay there instead of going back to Rhandeia? Such a commander may make "long marches" but he does not on the whole march fast, especially when his troops are foraging all day long. I feel convinced he never reached the city.

Page 186. A remarkable parallel in the same country occurred in the Russo-Turkish war. In 1878 Moukthar Pacha went into winter quarters at Kars in September, thinking the year's operations over. Being unable to feed his troops during the winter he sent many away on leave. The Russians fell upon him in October, turned his right flank, cut off his retreat, and annihilated his army at the Aladja Dagh. A more curiously exact repetition of the Rhandeia disaster occurring comparatively but a few miles away it would be hard to find.

Page 187. Presumably such a bridge existed.

Sect. 7. *Page* 191. *Campaign of* A.D. 63 *and Settlement* : Ann. xv. 24-31. Cestius Gallus : *cf.* coin of Antioch, ap. Eckhel. iii. 282. Josephus, B. J. ii. 143. He dies in 66, and is succeeded by C. Licinius Crassus Mucianus. Corbulo at Kharput between Dec. 63 and Dec. 64 : This is proved by an Inscription on two bases found at Kesserik near Kharput, which are dated with certainty. "Nero . . . Trib. Pot. xi. Cos. iv. Imp. viiii." *Cf.* J. H. Mordtmann, ap. Hermes xv. 289-294 ; Mommsen, *ib.* pp. 294-296 ; Ephem. Epig. v. p. 35. A curious coin of Diosheiron on the Cayster bears the names of both Nero and Corbulo. But it cannot be dated. *Cf.* Eckhel iii. p. 100.

Closing of Temple of Janus: Not mentioned by Tacitus, and denied by Orosius vii. 3. But the fact is stated by Suetonius, Nero 14, and is proved by coins showing the Temple closed, and with the legend, "Pace P. R. Terra Mariq. parta Janum clusit." Eckhel vi. pp. 273-4. Suetonius dates the closing in A.D. 66, and so *e.g.* Sievers, p. 119 n. But Gabrizi (*op. cit.* pp. 327-331) declares coins of Nero Trib. Pot. xi. (=A.D. 64) and xii. (=A.D. 65) exist to prove it, and as against Cohen quotes Fiorelli, No. 4353. *Cf.* G. Plate ii. 17. I cannot however follow G. in carrying the closing back to A.D. 56-57, and taking "clusit"="kept closed" (!!). Surely A.D. 64 is a very probable date, and I adopt it in the text. Josephus Castalio (ap. Graevius. Thes. Rom. Antiq. iv. p. 852 E. Venice, 1732) long ago defended Suetonius against Orosius successfully.

Sect. 8. *Page* 194. *Tiridates' Journey and the Golden Day:* Pliny, N. H. xxx. 14-17 ; Dio lxiii. 1-7 ; Suetonius, Nero 13-14, 30 ; Acta Frat. Arval. ed Henzen lxxxi.-lxxxiii. and 78. *Pompey's Theatre: cf.* Pliny, N. H. xxxiii. 54 ; Middleton, Ancient Rome, ii. 65-67. *Money Gifts:* I follow Suetonius in preference to Dio. *The Pretender:* Suetonius, Nero 57. *Mithraism of T. cf.* Dio lxiii. 5; Cumont, "Mithras" i. pp. 24, 245. *The Flavian policy on the E. frontier:* The evidence for the legionary camps is very varied and cannot here be given. I repeat Professor Pelham's view, obtained from him in lecture.

CHAPTER VI

Britain : See "Bibliography" at end for modern authorities. I must make chief use of my own previously published paper on the "Roman Legions in Britain" in the *English Historical Review*, Jan. 1903, pages 1-23. To this I must venture to refer the reader not so much for the arguments on which I base the conclusions which I set forth in this chapter, as for the many references, ancient and modern, on a discussion of which these conclusions are based. For Mr Haverfield's more authoritative exposition and discussion of the ancient evidence is, so far as I know, yet unpublished.

Sect. 1. For this section, *i.e.* for the history of Britain's relations with Rome before Nero I can hardly quote authorities in a note to what is merely a summary. Tacitus' account begins in 47 A.D. in Ann. xii. 31-40. Hence Dio lx. 19-22 is our main source. Inscriptions and coins add a good deal. Tacitus throughout displays the same defects as in his Armenian history, viz. geographical ignorance, strategical ignorance or lack of interest, a taste for picturesque incidents and rhetorical opportunities. Dio caricatures the last feature. The summary in the Agricola is valuable.

Page 201. *Camulodunum:* Certainly Colchester, not Maldon. *Cf.* Evans, Coins of the Ancient Britons, c. xi. ; Hübner, ap. C. I. L. vii. p. 34. For Camulus *cf. ib.* No. 1103 ; Haverfield, Arch. Journ. xlix. p. 184, *Plautius' Army:* variously estimated from 40,000-70,000 men, *cf.* Hübner. Deut. Rund. p. 223 ; Exerc. Brit. pp. 513 *sqq.*, 580-1 ; Furneaux ii. p. 131. Legio viii. Augusta also sent a detachment from Mainz. (C. I. L. v. 7003). *Plautius' March:* matter for an Appendix of six pages in a history of Claudius, not of Nero. I take my view after much deliberation. *Cf.* my paper mentioned above, pages 6-8. The Boduni are *not* the Gloucestershire Dobuni. *Claudius' Arch:* C. I. L. vi. 1. 920.

Page 202. *The Frontiers:* For the complicated evidence of the Roman stages of advance I must refer to my paper. But *cf.* especially for Gloucester, the mining in the Mendips in 49 A.D. C. I. L. vii. 1201, 1202 ; L'Année Épig. 1888, No. 53 ; Haverfield, Arch. Journ. xlviii. 258, xlix. 180-1 (Honey-Ditches near Seaton): whereas Isca is later ; for Leicester, Hübner, Ephem. Epig. iv. p. 201 ; Viroconium, C. I. L. vii. 154-156. Tacitus xii. 31. 2, I take to mean a Severn—Trent line, adopting the "cis Trisantonam" reading. Mr Henry Bradley has sufficiently proved the Trisantona-Trent identification in the *Academy* for 28th April and 19th May 1883. *Cf.* at length my paper, pp. 8-12.

Page 203. *Colonia Victrix: Cf.* Cutts' "Colchester," c. 4 ; Hübner, Deut. Rund. p. 231 and ap. C. I. L. vii. 34 ; Ruggiero, Diz. Epig. *sub voc.* ; C. I. L. xiv. 3955. There is no evidence it was ever called Claudia or Claudiensis.

Didius Gallus: Pref. equit. A.D. 43; Legate of Moesia, *c.* A.D. 47-49 (Ann. xii. 15); Curator aquarum, A.D. 49; Legate of Britain, A.D. 52-57. Frontinus, De Aqued. 102, makes him Cur. Aq. from 38-49. This must either be an error, or there was a Didius père, the Curator and Legate of Britain, and a D. fils, the prefect and leg. of Moesia. I follow Liebenam (p. 83) and Klebs (Prosop. Imp. Rom. *sub voc.*) in choosing the former rather than Domaszewski, ap. Bull. dell' Imp. Istituto Arch. Germ. Sezione Romana, vi. p. 163-167. Roma, 1891.

Sect. 2. *Page* 203. *Regni:* The "Goodwood" Inscription, found at Chichester, 1772, C. I. L. vii. 11; Tacitus' Agric. 14; Ptolemy ii. 3. 38. The Inscription is dated the end of the first century, and belongs to the son of Tacitus' Cogidumnus. So Hübner ad C. I. L. and Liebenam, *op. cit.* p. 91. Inscriptions and coins favour the "b" instead of the "m" in the King's name, and I prefer it here as in the names Dubnovellaunus and Trinobantes.

Iceni and Boudicca: Capital Venta Icenorum = Caistor near Norwich. *Cf.* Evans, *op. cit.* c. 15 and supplem. pp. 490-493. No coins bear any of the Tacitean names. I must regretfully adopt the form Boudicca for the popular Boadicea. It may be pedantic, but, as it happens to be correct, a historian must deny himself the pleasure which a County Council may enjoy. For a similar reason Caratacus must supplant Caractacus.

Page 204. The "chester" of our English towns, *e.g.* Chester, Cirencester, Winchester, Silchester, two Dorchesters, Gloucester, Exeter, Wroxeter, Doncaster, Colchester, Chichester, etc., only may prove the existence of Roman fortifications at the time of the Saxon invasion, and not of necessity the quarters of a legionary camp. A small percentage of the towns can be dated with anything like certainty. But at least those selected for mention in the text may with every probability be ascribed to this date. *Cf.* Hübner, Deut. Rund. 234. For the camp on the hill above Chagford, on which the Dartmoor heights look down so sternly, *cf.* Merivale vi. p. 28. But I doubt if this is Roman or of this period.

Page 205. *Deva:* As against Hübner's views that this was not a camp till Suetonius' time (D. R. p. 235: *cf.* Panzer, p. 173), or till the end of the century (ap. Ex. B. pp. 537-8) the new inscr. ap. Ephem. Epig. vii. 902 (with Domaszewski's comm. *op. cit.*) seems as strong as is any part of our erection of first-century history on our very scanty evidence and bold inferences, when combined with the Tacitus narrative. See at greater length my paper, page 21.

Sect. 3. *Page* 206. Suetonius' expedition and the "Clades Britannica": Tacitus, Ann. xiv. 29-39; Agric. 14; Dio lxii. 1-12; Suetonius, Nero 39. *Chronology:* A difficulty exists. Tacitus, Ann. xiv. 29. 1, dates both in A.D. 61. Objections are urged in favour of A.D. 60. (*a*) Suetonius' successor in Petr. Turpilianus, who is cos. with Caesennius Paetus in A.D. 61. (Ann. xiv. 29. 1.) An Inscr. C. I. L. vi. i. 597 mentions Paetus and P. Calvisius Ruso as coss. on March 1. If the year here is 61 Turpilianus may have resigned to become privatus by March 1. The reason of this is then supplied by Tacitus' words, "Qui iam consulatu abierat," xiv. 39. 4, *i.e.* he is to supersede Suetonius. Now the last battle was in late autumn, and the events following in Tacitus certainly imply a winter and following spring, *e.g.* Time is required for the continued campaign, xiv. 38, Polyclitus' mission and report, xiv. 39, his ultimate

recall. If then T. succeeds him in 61, the battle, etc., must have been in 60. (*b*) T. left Britain in A.D. 63 to become curator equarum. Frontinus, De Aq. 102. It is urged that his policy of masterly inactivity described by Tacitus xiv. 39. 5 must imply more than one year's governorship. Nero at least rewards him with triumphale decus, xv. 72. 2.

These arguments are not of course decisive, *e.g.* C. I. L. vi. i. 597 is referred by some to the Flavian age. But even excluding this xiv. 39. 4, remains. I therefore follow J. Asbach—Analecta historica et epigraphica Latina, 8° Bonn. 1868, ii. pp. 8-16—the Prosop. Imp. Rom. *sub vocc.*, and Liebenam, Forsch. I. pp. 81 *sq.*—in preferring the date 60 to the 61 accepted, *e.g.*, by Panzer, *op. cit.* p. 174. In this case Tacitus' is an "error gravissimus" in Asbach's words. But by this time we are well acquainted with his habit of combining two years' events under one in foreign policy (*cf.* his Armenian chronology especially), and if he dates the "tradere exercitum" rightly in A.D. 61 but forgets the winter, this is cause of no great surprise to us.

Caer Seiont: cf. Hübner, D. R. p. 225; Panzer, *op. cit.* p. 173. The only inscr. of Segontium, C. I. L. vii. 142, belongs to a much later date.

Page 211. *Cerialis' Defeat:* Placed at Wormingford, six miles N. of Colchester, by Merivale vi. p. 53, on the strength of a Tumulus there. I fear this is too uncertain to escape outside the obscurity of a note.

Page 212. *Poenius Postumus:* Ann. xiv. 37. 6. He is "camp prefect" only, yet in charge at Isca. This must imply that the legatus legionis is only temporarily absent, otherwise a legionary tribune would have been in command before a new legate's arrival. So Domaszewski. This is valuable. Hence my objection, *e.g.*, to Merivale's "Postumus crouched in terror behind his fortifications"—vi. p. 53. The absent legate may have been in Devon. Did this Postumus become Imogen's lover, and by what strange chance? I see no reason to change Poenius to Hoenius as Hübner, Ex. Brit. p. 532, just because P. is not found elsewhere, and H. is, C. I. L. vi. 161, 635, etc.

Page 212. *Suetonius' Numbers:* Both Domaszewski and Hübner, Ex. Brit. p. 549, estimate the Leg. xiv. at 6000. This is hardly possible as it has just come back from Mona. We cannot argue, as does D., from the small number of auxilia that S. never went far beyond Chester. 3000 seems to me more probable than 2000 for their strength, and in any case S. could only collect such forces as lay between Chester and London, and these probably were not many.

Page 213. *Suetonius' March and Plan of Campaign:* The comparison between the account in the text and that of our two ancient authorities is, I fear, as curious a one as in the history of the Armenian wars. These ancient writers cared nothing for and knew nothing of geography or strategy, and the modern historian, unless he takes the line of easiest resistance, is compelled to reconstruct the whole campaign from beginning to end. Else his history is, like Dio's, a mere washy rhetorical exercise.

In my account, therefore, I embody conclusions of my own. As regards, *e.g.*, the march, Domaszewski and Mommsen (vol. v., E. T. p. 181) hold that S. never went to London at all but remained and fought near Chester. From this I must entirely dissent. Our reconstruction *must* be based on such fragmentary facts as do happen to be given us in our ancient authorities; or if we reject them we must have very good

reason. Now here there is no reason at all to reject Tacitus' direct statement that S. reached London, and there hesitated what to do in view of the loss of the Ninth Legion, xiv. 33. 1. The German might have stayed at Chester. The Roman did not, and had excellent reasons for his activity. On the other hand I cannot accept the favourite English view that S. pushed on towards Colchester, and fought between London and Colchester, as Furneaux and Merivale, vi. p. 54. I have explained my reasons fully if incidentally in the text. S. had other things to think about than his "Communications with Gaul" (Merivale). And he and his men could hardly have swum the North Sea in case of a defeat. And even a Roman general had to anticipate various contingencies. Hence I adopt a view between the two theories. The bare suggestion of it I owe to Professor Pelham in an unpublished lecture. The strategy, etc., explaining it and the details are my own. The *failure of supplies*, a most valuable datum, is incidentally supplied to our great satisfaction by Dio. Tacitus does not mention it. A search along the line of Watling Street near Lichfield (as supplies do not run short at the beginning of a march), would be a pleasant exercise of ingenuity, especially for the local antiquarian.

Page 215. Boudicca's interminable harangues are a good specimen of the decay of any historical sense, as illustrated by the self-satisfied Dio, and may safely be omitted. The Romans could *see* the Queen. They could *not* hear her pseudo-Thucydidean periods. Similarly Suetonius' short speech in Tacitus becomes a triple oration in Dio, enough to scare any troops, however seasoned.

Page 216. Dio's account of the actual battle is as bad as his rhetoric. I take his τριχῇ ἔνειμε to represent the three arms, heavy infantry, light infantry, and cavalry. But how, *e.g.*, could the Romans slay the enemy "in the wood" which lay in the Roman rear and, as Tacitus tells us expressly, was unoccupied by the enemy? They are not the White King's forces in Looking-Glass Land. Throughout Tennyson is much more effective, if this is what is desired. The numbers for the Britons in Dio, 230,000 are not quite precise enough. I fear Boudicca must have counted them by Xerxes' methods.

Sect. 4. *Page* 216. Viz.: Coh. I. Alpinorum, I. Hispanorum mil. equit., I. Vardullorum civ. Rom., I. Celtiberorum, II. Vasconum equit. civ. Rom., III. Bracarum Augustanorum, and two others. Alae: I. Pannoniorum Tampiana, and Hispanorum Vettonum civ. Rom. *Not* the 8 Batavian cohorts which belonged to Leg. xiv. from the first. *Cf.* Hübner, Exerc. Brit. pp. 581-582.

Page 218. *Colchester Walls:* Circuit *c.* $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles and *c.* 10 ft. thick. Built on a tableland 100 ft. above and at bend of the river Colne. *Cf.* Cutts' "Colchester," ch. 4.

Sect. 5. *Page* 223. *Roman Policy in Germany: cf.* Ann. ii. 26; xi. 17; xii. 30, etc. *Upper Germany:* Ann. xiii. 53. *Lower Germany:* Corbulo, Ann. xi. 20; Dio lx. 30. Paulinus xiii. 53; Frisii xiii. 54; Ampsivarii xiii. 55, 56; Fire at Cologne xiii. 57; *Salt River fight* xiii. 57.

Sect. 6. *Page* 224. *Ethiopia:* Map: Pliny, N. H. xii. 19; Exploration: Pliny, N. H. vi. 181, 184; and Seneca, Nat. Quaest. vi. 8. 3, 4,

who supplies the details of the marshes and the sud. Dio lxiii. 8. 1. Candace: Seneca, *loc. cit.* *Cf.* Acts Apost. 8. 27.

Page 224. *Plautius Silvanus, etc.:* C. I. L. xiv. 3608. Date A.D. 57 according to Dessau (C. I. L. xiv. p. 394) after Borghesi, and Wilmanns. A.D. 62, 63 by Domaszewski after Henzen. Tyra's era begins in A.D. 57 doubtless (C. I. L. iii. 781), but the mention of the troops sent away to the Armenian War must refer to Leg. v. sent to Paetus in A.D. 62, not to Leg. iv. Scythica, which was in Germany when called to Syria in A.D. 57 (Tacitus, Ann. xiii. 35). Hence Tyra's era may refer to incorporation by Flavius Sabinus who was seven years legate of Moesia (Hist. iii. 75).

Legio viii. Augusta: In Moesia in A.D. 46. Mommsen, Ephem. Epig. ii. p. 259. Title earned there—*cf.* C. I. L. xi. 3004—proved by Domaszewski. Reinforced by Leg. vii. Claudia—Tacitus, Hist. ii. 85. Throughout this section *cf.* A. von Domaszewski, "Die Dislocation des römischen Heeres in Jahre 66 n. Chr." ap. Rheinisches Museum für Philologie, xlvii. 1892, pp. 207, 208. I alone, however, am responsible for the "Black Sea" theory, and its connection with the "Caspian Gates" expedition, which our ancient authorities and modern seem to me to misapprehend.

Page 226. *Chersonese, Colchis, etc.:* Josephus, Bell. Jud. ii. 164. Cotys I., son of Aspurgus, *cf.* Inscr. found at Kertsch of date A.D. 58—ap. Latyschev. Inscr. ant. Orae Sept. Ponti Euxini ii. No. 32 p. 33= Boeckh. C. I. G. ii. 2108. His coinage disappears from A.D. 63 to Vitellius, see reff. ap. Domaszewski, *loc. cit.* pp. 208, 209, *cf.* Cat. of Gk. Coins in B. M. "Pontus, etc.," pp. 52, 53, Plate xi. 9-14, xii. 1, 2.

Page 226. *Pontus:* Suetonius, Nero 18; Eutropius vii. 14; Aurel. Victor. De Caes. Epit. 5. Vopiscus. Vit. Aurel. 21. 11, says Nero therefore extended the Pomerium. Dated in 66 by Eutropius, and the revolt in consequence of annexation is certainly 69 (Tacitus, Hist. iii. 47), which suits the later date well, as does Tacitus' silence in the Annals. But the era of Trapezus, Neocaesarea, and Zela, is decisive in favour of 63. Mommsen (Provinces E. T. i. p. 324 n.) takes 63: Sievers (p. 121 n.) 66 A.D. For coins *cf.* Eckhel. ii. pp. 355-359; Schiller, p. 172 n.; and in general Cat. of Gk. Coins in B. M. "Pontus, etc.," pp. 46, 47. Plate x. Nos. 1-5.

Page 227. *Caspian Expedition:* Pliny, N. H. vi. 40; Suetonius, Nero 19; Tacitus, Hist. i. 6, 9; ii. 66; Dio lxiii. 8. 1, 2. Legio xiv.: Tacitus, Hist. ii. 66, *cf. ib.* i. 59; ii. 27; *cf.* Mommsen, ap. Hermes xiii. p. 101 n. Sievers' idea that the expedition would have involved war again with Parthia (p. 120) has nothing to recommend it. In Tacitus, Hist. i. 6, surely "Alanos" and not "Albanos" is the right reading?

CHAPTER VII

Sect. 1. *Page* 232. *Sculpture:* Pliny, N. H. xxxiv. 48. 82, 63; *cf.* Merivale v. p. 135 n., 176 n. *Painting:* Pliny, N. H. xxxv. 51, 52, 91. Petronius, §§ 83, 88. *Cf.* Lanciani, Ruins and Excav. of Anc. Rom., pp. 408, *sqq.* Stained marble: Pliny, N. H. xxxv. 2, 3. Other inventions under Nero—*cf.* Pliny, N. H. xvi. 233; xxxvi. 195.

Page 233. *Nero's Poetry: cf.* in general, Ann. xiv. 16; xv. 49. 5; Suetonius, Nero, 10, 24, 52; *ib.* Domitian i.; Martial viii. 70. 8; Pliny,

Epist. v. 3. 6; Pliny, N. H. xxxvii. 50. Of his own verses the extant lines are

(*a*) "Quique pererratam subductus Persida Tigris
Deserit, et longo terrarum tractus hiatu
Reddit quaesitas jam non quaerentibus undas."
Ap. Schol. Lucan. iii. 261.

(*b*) "Colla Cytheriacae splendent agitata columbae."
Ap. Seneca, Nat. Quaest. i. 5, 6.

(*c*) "Sub terris tonuisse putes."
Ap. Suetonius, Vita Lucani 51.

Certain lines in Persius' first satire are said by the Scholiast to be Nero's, introduced by way of parody of the poet, viz. 93, 94, 99-101, to which Baehrens (Frag. Poet. Rom. pp. 368, 369) adds v. 95. This I must regard as improbable. I think Boissier's praise, ap. L'Opposition sous les Césars, p. 264, exaggerated. *Cornutus:* Dio lxii. 29. It is Renan, ap. Les Apôtres, pp. 344-345, who compares him on an equality with the Christian martyrs! *Nero's Troica:* mentioned twice, viz. by Servius on Vergil, Georg. iii. 36 and Aen. v. 370. It is common belief that Nero sang his own verses over the burning city, but there is no ancient evidence for this. *Petronius:* Sat. 89, 90. This "Halosis Troiae" is the despair of commentators. They agree for the most part that no parody of Vergil is intended, but differ as to whether one of Nero's Troica is meant. As we do not possess the latter, we can hardly say. They are also disturbed by its undoubted merits, and by the absence in the 65 lines of any allusion to the burning of the city. I fear we cannot help them. I assume here the identity of this Petronius with Nero's friend—on which, *cf.* at length below, chap. ix. sect. 5. *Cf.* on the poem Collignon, Étude sur Pétron, pp. 134-149; Enia, Il Satiricon, etc., pp. 81-83, see Gen. Bibliog. *Lucan:* see below, chap. viii. sect. 1.

Page 235. *Reff.* Ann. xv. 33, 34, 36; Suetonius, Nero, 19, 20; Dio lxiii. 18; Pliny, N. H. xix. 108, *cf. ib.* xxxiv. 166.

Nero's Luxury, etc.: Suetonius, Nero, 27, 30; *cf.* Juvenal iv. 136-139.

"Noverat ille
Luxuriam imperii veteris, noctesque Neronis
Iam medias."

The "Quadringenis . . . aleam lusit" of Suetonius 30 is either 400 (= *c.* £3, 10s.), or 400,000 (= *c.* £3500). One seems too small, the other incredibly large. But I suppose it must be the latter sum. After all, it is only popular scandal, and "Ten thousand a year or so," as Henry Kingsley says in one of his novels, makes no difference to it. *Luxury in Rome: cf.* Seneca, De Benef. i. 9; iii. 16; vii. 9; De Brev. Vitae, 12, 13; Nat. Quaest. i. 17; iii. 18; iv. 13; Cons. ad Helv. 6. 10, etc. etc. *Ditto in Country: cf.* Petronius, 27 to 78. *Silanus:* Ann. xv. 35. *The Revel "in stagno Agrippae,"* etc.: Ann. xv. 37; Suetonius, Nero, 28, 29, 30; Dio lxii. 15.

Sect. 2. *Page* 240. *Nero and the fire:* I explain in the text the reasons which lead me without hesitation to acquit Nero of incendiarism, though not of the comparatively harmless charge of dramatic song. All the circumstantial evidence is strongly in his favour, and the origin of the accusation at the time, and its subsequent embellishment are alike easily understood under all the circumstances.

As regards the extant authorities, *Tacitus* alone, xv. 38, 39, *cf.* 50, refuses to condemn Nero, and leaves the question open, for which Schiller, pp. 16, 17, reproaches him bitterly. *Suetonius*, Nero 38, amusingly turns Tacitus' phrases "incertum," "rumor," etc., into "open" and undisputed facts. Tacitus says outright that his authorities were divided on the question. Suetonius obviously chose his simply with an eye to effect. *Cf.* Peter, *op. cit.* ii. p. 333. *Pliny*, N. H. xvii. 5, ascribes the fire to Nero. But this suggests that Cluvius Rufus did not, and he is a far better witness. *Cf.* Appendix A, *e.g.* Raabe, p. 329, makes too much of this witness of Pliny's. *Dio*, lxii. 16-18, writes a rhetorical exercise after the style of Thucydides, which really is rather well done. I have had, however, to deny myself the pleasure of using another man's imaginative faculty, and confined myself almost exclusively to Tacitus, adopting, however, Schiller's likely suggestion (p. 428) that the Pisonian conspirators had a hand in spreading the report. Suetonius and Dio are even convinced by Nero's very wise measures to stay the flames' advance, which they regard as assisting their spread! Any fireman could have told them differently. Of course such writers as the poet of the "*Octavia*" (v. 831-833), *Eutropius* vii. 14, *Orosius* vii. 7 (whose "tombs," however, I have been unable to resist), and *S. Augustine*, Serm. 291, condemn Nero, though for different motives. The whole is a good study in the use of ancient authorities.

The moderns are much divided, and fall into three classes. (1) Those who condemn Nero unhesitatingly: *e.g. Naudet*, *op. cit.* p. 116; *Keim*, *op. cit.* p. 186; *Raabe*, pp. 330-336, who hedges a little; *Duméril*, *op. cit.* p. 284; *Lanciani*, Destr. of Anc. Rome, p. 17. (2) Those who acquit Nero unhesitatingly: *e.g. Gibbon*, c. xvi. ed. Bury, vol. ii. p. 84; *Merivale*, who ascribes the fire to a retributive Providence, and likens Rome to the cities of the Plain, vi. p. 160; *Hertzberg*, p. 246; *Sievers*, pp. 111-113; *Aubé*, p. 88, even though "prepared *à priori* to believe anything of this bouffon au-dessus des lois"; *Latour St Ybars*, pp. 400-405, who even denies the "song," and urges that no incendiary would have begun with the Circus Maximus: yet it apparently would not have been a bad choice given a S.E. wind; *Bury*, pp. 286-7, who urges Nero was already in financial straits (which is uncertain) and not likely to add to them; *Schiller*, pp. 425-433; *Fountain*, p. 33. (3) Those who are doubtful or take a middle course, *e.g.*, *Wiedemeister*, p. 265, who finds such a crime "psychologically appropriate to a maniac," but thinks it unproven; *Renan*, Les Ap. pp. 144-153 (criticised by Arnold, Die Christenverf, p. 42), who thinks Nero assisted its ravages, but did not start it; he is, of course, eloquent as usual; and *Ranke*, pp. 118, 119, 312-314 (criticised by Fabia, "Sources," p. 413 n.), who exonerates Nero from the first to hold him guilty of the second outbreak of the fire. *De Quincey*, pp. 79-81, is the best reading of them all, for enjoyment's sake. Under the circumstances I take my own view, and explain my own reasons. It is of interest to remember that in a very similar way James, Duke of York, who chiefly strove to subdue the Fire of London in 1666, was skilfully accused of it by Monmouth (I owe this to Dr Fountain, p. 33); and Rostopchin was accused by the French of the Fire of Moscow in Sept. 1812 on the evidence of the lowest class of Russians caught plundering during it, and he vigorously denied it eventually. (*Cf.* H. B. George, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, pp. 220, 221.)

Page 241. *The Fire in general:* Tacitus, Ann. xv. 38-41. C. I. L. vi.

1. 826, 10. 11. "Quando urbs per novem dies arsit Neronianis temporibus." A very valuable paper, which I have largely used, is that by V. J. Emery, in the Proceedings of the American Philological Society for July 1895, pp. xxiv.-xxvi. For the "4 regions" spared, however, I prefer the consensus of opinion of Merivale vi. p. 163, Schiller, p. 175, Raabe, p. 322, and Hertzberg, p. 246. Both Emery and Jordan, ap. Topogr. der Stadt Rom., agree that there is some exaggeration in the picture of the "total destruction" of the seven regions.

Sect. 3. *Page* 243. *Rebuilding:* Ann. xv. 43. Nero is said to have given away 2200 million sesterces, ap. Tacitus, Hist. i. 20. The donations for rebuilding and its expenses may largely account for this sum, even though Plutarch accounts for it by gifts to actors and athletes. And Tiridates' thousand million may be included. Certainly the Treasury was exhausted at the end of the reign, despite Nero's "plunder of the provinces" (*cf.* below), his "benevolences" (*cf.* Suetonius, 32. 44), and coinage depreciation, perhaps wrongly though usually adduced in this connection. (*Cf. supra*, note to p. 85). Use of débris, *e.g.* ap. Via di S. Gregorio to raise the ground level 10 or 15 feet. *Cf.* Lanciani, Destr. of Anc. Rome, pp. 19, 20. *Timagenes:* "felicitati Urbis inimicus": Seneca, Epist. 91. *Thessalus:* Pliny, N. H. xxix. 9. We can hardly to-day allow the pestilence of A.D. 65 to have been caused by the greater sunlight and air which Nero bestowed on the city.

Sect. 4. *Page* 245. "*The Aurea Domus*": Ann. xv. 42, 52. Suetonius, Nero 31, 39; Otho 7; Dio lxv. 4; Pliny, N. H. 33. 54; 36. 111-113; Martial, Epig. Spect. ii.—date A.D. 80—an epigram eloquent of the dislike felt for it. *The Colossus:* Pliny, N. H. 34, 45-47: he is very contemptuous of Zenodorus; Spartianus, Vita Hadriani xix. 12, 13; Commodus set his own head on it in place of Nero's—Lampridius, Vit. Comm. xvii. 9, 10; The "*Aedes Seia*" and the Cappadocian "Phengites": Pliny, N. H. 36. 163; *cf.* Middleton, Anc. Rome ii. p. 148. *Amulius the painter:* Pliny, N. H. 35. 120. He in his picture of Minerva was the Holbein of his day. Orosius vii. 12. 4 burns the palace up, a fictitious fate which does not spoil the customary moral. *Raphael* and the find, ap. Vasari, Vita di Giovanni da Udine. *Cf.* Merivale vi. p. 176, Raabe, pp. 358, 359. *Cf.* in gen. Lanciani, Ruins and Excav. p. 371.

Page 247. *Money Straits:* Suetonius, Nero 32. Tacitus, Ann. xvi. 1-3; xv. 45. *Plunder of Statues:* Pliny, N. H. 34. 84; Dio Chrys. Orat. 21 and 31. *Pergamum:* expressly said by Dio Chrys., to have lost many statues. Hence the "vim . . . . prohibentis" of Tacitus, Ann. xvi. 23, must have been unsuccessful. So Fabia, Rev. de Phil. 20, 1896, p. 144. *Delphi:* Pausanias x. 7. 1, 19. 1; *Olympia: ib.* v. 25. 9, 26. 3; *Thespiae: ib.* ix. 27. 3. Eros had various journeys before he perished at Rome by fire. *Acratus in Asia:* Ann. xvi. 23. 1, with Furneaux *ad loc.* preferable to Schiller, p. 248.

Page 248. *The Canal:* Ann. xv. 42. Suetonius, Nero 31 (whose ("160" miles is impossible, 135 Roman = 125 Eng. is the maximum); *cf.* Statius, Silvae iv. 3. A good paper on it by A. Marks, ap. Transactions R. S. L. vol. xxi. pp. 30 with map. I accept his identification of the Grotta di Pace, and the Grotta della Sibylla with Agrippa's work, despite Strabo. The width is an obstacle, though naturally the galleys would not expect to pass one another in the canal tunnel. But it is 16

feet wide only, which seems not enough. But we do not know how a quinquereme went through a canal yet. *Caecuban:* Pliny, N. H. 14, 61.

Sect. 5. I endeavour in this section to regard the persecution and its causes from the Roman point of view. Wellnigh every sentence represents a conclusion formed upon some controversy, the evidence being as intricate as the fight of opinions is severe. For that evidence and for those controversies I now refer to the chapter and notes and appendix more particularly devoted to the whole question of Christianity in Rome under Nero. *Cf.* below, chapter ix., and Appendix B. I therefore add only a few special notes here.

Page 251. "*Correpti qui fatebantur*": Ann. xv. 44. 5. See *supra*, ap. Appendix B. "Correpti"="denounced," not "arrested." The "confession" *can* only have been of the fire. It is a perversion of language, however creditable the motive, to make it=a confession of Christianity. *Cf. supra*, ap. Appendix B. I agree with, *e.g.*, Duruy iv. p. 53, Aubé, p. 105, Arnold, p. 70, Milman ii. 37, and Renan, that there was probably a misunderstanding of Christian language at the bottom of the belief in their confession. Tertullian (Apol. 37) and S. Cyprian (De bono patientiae, 21, 22) illustrate the possibility at a much later date, when the belief in Christ's immediate coming was growing fainter. On all other points I refer to my subsequent chapter and appendix. "*Subdidit reos*" implies that Nero knew them guiltless of the fire. This is Tacitus' opinion, and it must be remembered that he was half inclined to believe Nero himself guilty, which view we reject. The epithets "infernal," "devilish," etc., lavished on the Emperor by Christian writers may be very well deserved in view of the punishments he inflicts on the martyrs (though Romans had long since been accustomed to such), but are *not*, I submit, so clearly deserved in view of the *possibility* of Nero's belief in their particular, and the *certainty* of his belief in their general, wickedness and criminality.

Page 252. *The Punishments, etc.:* In Ann. xv. 44 I adopt the reading "aut crucibus affixi sunt flammandi utque . . .," the "ut—urerentur" being explanatory of the flammandi, and the next sentence expository of the whole. *Cf.* Arnold, *op. cit.* pp. 7-11. The famous sentence from S. Clement of Rome, Epist. i. to Corinth. ed Knopf. 1899, c. 6. 1, 2: "Διὰ ζῆλος διωχθεῖσαι γυναῖκες Δαναΐδες καὶ Δίρκαι αἰκίσματα δεινὰ καὶ ἀνόσια παθοῦσαι," κ.τ.λ., almost certainly refers to the Neronian persecution in spite, *e.g.*, of Neumann's denial. Lightfoot (ed. S. Clem. pp. 346-347) proves its date A.D. 95-96 as against 120 (Keim) or 68 (others). So Renan. The ἐν ἡμῖν of preceding sentence certainly=in Rome; *cf.* ἡμῖν and παρ' ὑμῖν of chap. 1. The πολὺ πλῆθος ἐκλεκτῶν of the passage exactly=the ingens multitudo of Tacitus. Lightfoot's proposed "γυναῖκες νεάνιδες παίδισκαι" for the very curious Δαναΐδες Δίρκαι is ingenious and tempting—but praestat difficilius lectu. It is impossible to suppose the easy reading here changed to the very difficult one. No satisfactory explanation of the Danaids has been given, as their doom of pouring water into sieves seems not terrible enough. But it is idle to speculate as Arnold does. "Dirce" is easy. Renan points out that the famous Dirce statue now in Naples Museum was just then the object of much admiration in Rome, acc. Pliny, N. H. 34, 36 (*cf.* Renan, pp. 169-172). For this favourite type of punishment *cf.* Suetonius. Calig. 57; Martial, Spect. 5, 7. I follow Harnack and Renan in thinking the Θεατριζόμενοι of Hebrews x. 32 perhaps literally meant,

despite Lightfoot's quotation of 1 Cor. iv. 9. Renan, L'Antichr. pp. 165-175, has a long and terrible description of what may or must have been seen. I have kept to the actual statements more closely.

CHAPTER VIII

Sect. 1. *Page* 260. *Republicanism, etc.: cf.* Dio lx. 1, 15; Seneca, Ad Marciam (*c.* A.D. 49), 1, etc.; Ad Helviam 9; "Hercules," v. 926; on Cato: De Const. Sap. 2. 3; De Provid. 3. 14; Epist. 95; on Caesar, De Benef. v. 16, but more favourable De Ira, ii. 23; iii. 30; on Brutus, De Benef. ii. 20. Beginnings of Conspiracy: Ann. xiv. 65; xv. 47. Nero and Republicans: *cf.* Suetonius, Nero 39; Hertzberg, p. 228.

Page 262. *The Conspirators: Lateranus:* Ann. xv. 49; Juvenal viii. 147, 167-171; x. 15-18. *Epicharis* xv. 51. 5. *Rufus:* xv. 50, *cf. supra* pp. 77, 135. *Flavus:* xv. 50, 67. *Asper:* xv. 68. *Silvanus: cf.* C. I. L. v. 2. 7003. *Piso:* xv. 48, 49; Schol. ad Juv. v. 108; and the whole of the "Laus Pisonis," ap. Baehrens. Poet. Lat. Min. i. 220-236. This is ascribed to Statius, and by Raabe (pp. 288, 299), to Saleius Bassus. But Baehrens declares the one certain thing about the poem to be that its author is uncertain. It is a pretty piece of work, and the naïve hope of the young poet, not yet 20, to find in Piso such a patron as Maecenas was to Vergil, is expressed in delightfully ingenious fashion. *Scaevinus:* xv. 49, 55. 6; *Natalis:* xv. 50. 2, 55. 6; *Quintianus:* xv. 49; *Senecio:* xiii. 12; xv. 50. *Seneca:* xv. 65; Dio lxii. 24; Juvenal viii. 211. But *cf.* pages 274 *sqq.*

Page 265. *Lucan:* See Gen. Bibliog. I owe much to Heitland and Tria in particular, agreeing entirely with the latter's remark that for Lucan to have "repubblicaneggiato" was a fault, in that the attempt to call up the phantom of Republican liberty was a "fatuo fuoco." *Cf.* throughout Suetonius' and Vacca's Lives of Lucan; Ann. xv. 49. 3; Statius, Silvae, ii. 7—the Genethliacon Lucani. His "De Incendio Urbis," to judge from Statius, hardly spared Nero in the matter. To find caustic allusions to Nero, however, in Phars. viii. 397-410 and vii. 776 *sq.*, is to me impossible. For his attitude to the Empire in general *cf.* vii. 432-3, 694-7; iv. 821-3, etc. I follow Heitland in this, not Merivale.

Page 266. *Nero and the Nobility:* Contrast with this numerical analysis of fact, *e.g.* the silly stuff in Orosius vii. 7 and Eutropius vii. 14. Naudet, *op. cit.* p. 117, deserves quotation on "the Conspiracy":

"Une conspiration contre le tyran mais non contre la tyrannie. Ce n'était qu'une association d'amours-propres blessés, d'inimitiés personelles, d'ambitions hypocrites, et non un concours de dévouements généreux, de haines patriotiques, trouvant dans une sérieuse et profonde émotion du peuple leur foyer et leur soutien."

My studies lead me to very much the same conclusion.

Sect 2. Piso's Conspiracy: Ann. xv. 48-74. *Cf.* Dio lxii. 24. Polyaenus, Strateg. viii. 62.

Page 270. *Lucan:* Duruy, iv. 67, comments fiercely on his accusation of his mother, and I think justly. Merivale, vi. pp. 186-7, suggests the whole tale was trumped up to do him discredit. The well-meant defence does not carry conviction with it.

Page 272. Deaths: *Lateranus: cf.* Epictetus i. 1. 19, 20. *Asper's* single

case becomes "nonnulli" in Suetonius, c. 36, a characteristic exaggeration, *cf.* Peter ii. p. 334. *Caesennius Maximus:* acc. Ann. xv. 71, Caesonius ap. Martial, vii. 44, 45, *cf.* Seneca, Epist. 87. His friend Q. Ovidius went with him into exile—a Roman Pylades. *Antonia*, Ann. xv. 53. Suetonius, Nero 35. *Cf.* Fabia, Rev. de Phil. 1895, pp. 218-220.

Page 274. THE PISONIAN CONSPIRACY: TABLE OF RESULTS.

	Death or Suicide.	Exile.	Degradation.	Pardon.	Acquittal, etc.
Guilty.	*Senators.* Piso. Plautius Lateranus. Lucan. Afranius Quintianus. Flavius Scaevinus. *Equites.* Claudius Senecio. Vulcatius Araricus. Julius Augurinus. Munatius Gratus. Marcius Festus. *Soldiers.* Faenius Rufus. Subrius Flavus. Sulpicius Asper. Maximus Scaurus. Venetus Paulus. *Women.* Epicharis.	[None.] But some of the "Innocent" probably belong here; *cf.* Ann. xv. 73. 3.	[None.]	*Senators.* [None.] *Equites.* Antonius Natalis. Cervarius Proculus. *Soldiers.* †Statius Proximus. †committed suicide. *Women.* [None.]	*Senators.* [None.] *Equites.* [None.] *Soldiers.* †Gavius Silvanus. *Women.* [None.]
?	*Senators.* Seneca. *Women.* Antonia.	[None.]	[None.]		
Innocent.	*Senators.* Vestinus.	*Senators.* Novius Priscus. Annius Pollio. Glitius Gallus. Rufrius Crispinus. Verginius Flavus. Musonius Rufus. †Cluvidienus Quietus. †Julius Agrippa. †Blitius Catulinus. †Petronius Priscus. †Julius Altinus. Caesennius Maximus. (†? Senators.) *Women.* Caedicia.	*Senators.* [None.] *Equites.* [None.] *Soldiers.* Pompeius. Cornelius Martialis. Flavius Nepos. Statius Domitius.	[None.]	*Women.* Acilia.
Total.	Nineteen.	Thirteen.	Four.	Three.	Two.

Total: Forty-one.
Senators: 19; Equites: 7; Soldiers: 11; Women: 4.

Sect. 3. *Page* 276. *Seneca and Study of Nature, etc.*: Ann. xv. 23, 45, 64; Dio lxii. 25; Seneca, Ad Helv. 8; Nat. Quaest *passim*: but especially vi. 3. 3; 5. 2; vii. 30. 3; 31. 2. The books belong to A.D 62-63. By giving the opening of iv. to the end of iii. we get a systematic plan of a moral lesson at the end of every book, which now is wanting. His vineyards: *ib.* iii. 7. 1.

Page 278. *Cf.* the letters to Lucilius *passim*: especially 23, 49, 58, 65, 71, 89, 113, 117.

Page 280. *De Beneficiis:* Ad Aebutium Liberalem. Lipsius' rueful remark is very true: "The books are good; but in truth confused in order and the handling; which a man though circumspect shall hardly expedite." A more hopelessly confused arrangement it would be impossible to conceive. Seneca wrote currente calamo and his works are like nothing so much as the several hundred yards of a stock jobber's tape, wreathed about an untidy room. Date of Treatise 58, according to Lehmann, p. 13, and Martens, for very inconclusive reasons. I see in vii. 20. 4, an allusion to the Campanian Earthquake of A.D. 63 (see above, p. 98), and should regard these seven books as the work also of Seneca's leisure.

My quotations are especially from iii. 1-5; ii. 30; iii. 17; v. 20; iv. 40; vi. 1-6; vii. 32.

Page 283. *Seneca's Complicity: cf.* Tacitus, Ann. xiv. 65; xv. 60; *cf.* xv. 45. Dio's belief in his guilt in lxii. 24 counts for very little. I summarise in the text the various arguments. For the actual cross examination there is no space. Of modern writers, Schiller (pp. 695-8), Duruy iv. 65, Merivale vi. 156, incline to believe his guilt; Ranke, pp. 122-123, and Raabe, pp. 299-300 to disbelieve. There is no very good discussion of the question in any author.

Sect. 4. *Page* 288. *Death of Seneca:* Ann. xv. 61-64. Duruy, iv. pp. 5 and 70, is undoubtedly unsympathetic for a Frenchman. Seneca and Socrates: *cf.* De Providentia 3, 12, 13. The Roman would have rejoiced in the Berlin Museum Double Bust of himself and the Greek philosopher—found in 1813 at Rome. This must be Seneca, though the ascription may be later—but no other Roman could have claimed the position. The usual Seneca portrait of popular histories and religious works is of course not Seneca at all, though it makes a pathetically wild picture enough. *Cf.* Bernoulli i. pp. 276-280, Plate xxiv.—reproduced in this book. It cannot be helped that the philosopher presents a more lusty appearance than we could have expected from an apples and water diet.

On Seneca himself there are endless treatises and opinions. *Cf.* the Gen. Bibliog. For interest and suggestiveness Martha and Boissier rank as high as, *e.g.*, Baumgarten does low. Ribbeck, Raabe, pp. 299-300, and Beulé, p. 324, are sensible. Latour St Ybars, pp. 460-461, makes an aggressive onslaught on him. I owe a debt to the first two named, although I think Boissier (Relig. Rom. ii. 44-45) exaggerated. Perhaps I may venture to illustrate Seneca's characteristics as a stylist and writer even from "Tristram Shandy": "Philosophy has a fine saying for everything.—For Death it has an entire set: the misery was they all at once rushed so into my father's head that 'twas difficult to string them together so as to make anything of a consistent show out of them. He took them as they came."

Seneca and Christianity: The Fathers view Seneca with balanced approbation, *e.g.* Lactantius, who knows him well and praises him highly, *cf.* Inst. i. 5. 16; ii. 4. 6. 14; iii. 15; v. 9; vi. 24; Tertullian (Apol. 12, De Anima 20); St Jerome (Adv. Jovin. 1). The literature on the "Letters" by itself runs to an enormous length. See Gen. Bibliog. But no one follows Fleury in his demonstration that Seneca was a Christian, and it is mere waste of time to destroy again an impossible theory already slaughtered, *e.g.* by Aubertin. Boissier (Relig. Rom. ii. 52-104) is excellent. Kreyher, c. 6, makes some rather useless refinements. Champagny (iv. 264-266 and Appendix) wastes much labour.

Sect. 5. *Page* 289. *Cf.* Tacitus, Ann. xvi. 16. Merivale vi. pp. 219-237 and 286.

Page 290. *Cf.* Dio lxi. 18; lxiii. 15. Tacitus, Ann. xvi. 7-13. Orosius vii. 7. *Cassius Longinus: cf.* Pliny, Ep. vii. 24. 8, 9; Pomponius, Dig. i. 2. 2. 51; Mayor on Juvenal x. 16. *Lugdunum:* A.D. 65 according to Ann. xvi. 13. 5. Seneca, Ep. 91, speaks of the fire as in the "centesimus annus" from the city's founding, *i.e.* B.C. 43 = A.D. 58. But there is an indirect allusion in the passage to the Fire of Rome, and the number 100 is certainly used as a round number. *Cf.* Otto Hirschfeld, ap. Rheinisches Museum, Bd. 52, 1897, pp. 294-6, and Gercke, Senecastudien. Schiller's view, p. 116 n., that seven years elapsed between the fire and the rebuilding of the city is impossible.

Page 291. *Antistius:* Ann. xvi. 14, 15; *cf.* xiii. 28; xiv. 48, 49; Hist. iv. 44. *Crispinus:* Ann. xvi. 17. Fabia, Rev. de Phil. 1898, p. 345, thinks Nero grudged even the dead Poppaea as a memory to her former husband. *Mela:* Ann. xvi. 17. Seneca, Ad Helv. 18. 2. Polyaenus, Strateg. 8. 62. *Marcus:* Sen. Ad Helv. 18. 3. *Novatilla: ib.* 18. 7. *Thermus:* Ann. xvi. 20.

Sect. 6. *Page* 294. *Petronius:* Ann. xvi. 18, 19. Pliny, N. H. 37. 20. *Cf.* Martha, *op. cit.* p. 8. Only the rage for identification which seems a plague of students of classical antiquity could see in the "Satire" of Petronius the book sent to Nero, the "Sündenregister," as Mommsen happily entitles it. One solitary Italian, whose work I have been unable to obtain, seems to cling still to a lonely belief in this identity.

Sect. 7. *Page* 302. *Stoic Cosmopolitanism: cf.* Seneca, De Tranq. Animi iv. 4; De Otio iv. 1; De Vita Beata 24. 3; De Ira ii. 31. 7; "*Quietism*" (from Merivale vi. p. 245): *ib.* Epist. 73. Unpopularity: *ib.* Epist. 5, 29, 76; Nat. Quaest. vii. 32. 1-3. *Cf.* below, chap. ix. sect. 2. *Thrasea:* Ann. xiii. 49; xiv. 12, 48; xv. 23; xvi. 21-29, 34, 35: Suetonius, Nero 37; Dio lxii. 26: Epictetus i. 1. 26, 27. *Rusticus Arulenus: cf.* Suetonius, Domit. 10. Pliny, Epist. i. 5. 2. *Demetrius:* Epictetus i. 25. 22; Philostratus Vit. Apoll. 5. 19, 6. 31. Seneca, Epist. 67. 14. De Provid 3. *Cf.* Boissier, Relig. Rom. ii. p. 13. He was exiled and withdrew to Athens. *Helvidius Priscus:* Tacitus, Hist. iv. 5, 6. *Cf.* C. Mancini, Storia di P. Helvidio Prisco, ap. Atti della reale Accademia di Arch., etc. Napoli. 1883, pp. 59-152—a very rambling monograph. *Paconius:* Epictetus i. 1. 28; i. 2. 12-18. On Thrasea in general Schiller has written at length, pp. 669-687. *Cf.* Mayor on Juvenal, 5. 35. Pliny, Epist. 6. 29, 1. *Apollonius:* Philostratus, Vita Ap. iv. 42-44,

Mayor, ad Juv. i. 155. *Soranus and Servilia:* Ann. xvi. 23, 30-33. Dio lxii. 26. Juvenal iii. 116-118. *Cf.* Furneaux ii. 83-85. Celer condemned under Vespasian: Tacitus, Hist. iv. 40. Cassius Asclep. exiled but restored by Galba: Dio *loc. cit.*

CHAPTER IX

Sect. 2. *Page* 308. *Seneca on "God": cf.* De Benef. iv. 8. 1, 2; 9-13; Nat. Quaest. ii. 45; De Vita beata 8. 4; Ad. Helv. viii. 3; xii. 4; De Provid. 2; Epist. 31, 41. 2, 47. 18, 83, 95. *Cf.* Hippolytus on stoicism. Refut. i. 21. Boissier, Relig. Rom. ii. 73-75.

Page 310. *Seneca on "Death":* Ad Marc. 10. 4, 11. 5; Nat. Quaest. vi. 32; Epist. 4, 12, 91; *on the "Soul":* Ad Helv. 11, 20; Epist. 106, 117; *On its Immortality, etc.:* Ad Helv. 20; De Provid. 6. 6, 9; Ad Marc. 19. 4-6, 25. 1-3, 26. 7; Ad Polyb. 9 *passim;* Epist. 24, 36, 63, 102. *Cf.* Boissier, Relig. Rom. ii. 77, 78. *The Dies Diluvii, etc.:* Ad Marc. 26. 6, 7; Ad Polyb. 1, 2; Nat. Quaest. iii. 27-30; Epig. 7. The "Octavia" 392-396; probably derived from Heracleitus, *cf.* Diog. ix. 8; Hippolytus. Refut. ix. 10. Zeller, Heracleitus, p. 69.

Page 313. *Man's duty, etc.:* Epist. 95. *Suffering:* De Ira ii. 27-30; De Providentia *passim: Suicide:* De Ira iii. 15; De Provid. 6; Epist. 12, 24, 68, 69, 70.

Page 314. De Vita beata, 20. 3-5; Epist. 66 and 71.

Page 316. *The Defects: cf.* De Ira ii. 10, 13; De clementia ii. 5-7; De Tranq. *ad fin.*; Epist. 31, 59, 71.

Page 317. *Unpopularity, etc.:* Nat. Quaest. vii. 32. Epist. 5, 29, 76. *Cf.* Persius i. 131-134. Petronius, § 71.

Sect. 4. *Page* 323. *Seneca on Epicurus, etc:* De Vita beata 9-13; De Benef. iv. 2; De Const. Sap. 15. 4; Epist. 2.

Page 327. *Hobbies of the rich:* De Brev. Vitae 12, 13; Ad Helv. 11; De Tranq. Animi 9; Epist. 27. *Dinners:* De Brev. Vitae 12; Ad Helv. 10: De Const. Sap. 11. 3; Nat. Quaest. iii. 18; iv. 13. *Luxury, Marriage, etc.:* De Brev. Vit. 12; Ad Helv. 16; Ad Marc. 19; Nat. Quaest. i. 17; De Benef. i. 9; iii. 16; vii. 9; De Const. Sap. 6. 1; De Ira i. 15; Petronius § 116. *The People, etc:* Ad Helv. 6; De Ira i. 2; iii. 35, 40; De Brev. Vit. 13; De Vita beata 26. 8; Epist. 18. 70.

Sect. 5. For this section and for modern works—see Gen. Bibliography.

Page 327. *Petronius: (A) Author:* Anc. evidence: In MSS. the author is called Petronius Arbiter; ap. Tacitus, Ann. xvi. 18, C. Petronius . . . elegantiae arbiter; ap. Plutarch, De Adul. et amico 27 Τίτος Πετρώνιος is courtier of Nero's; ap. Macrobius, Somn. Scip. 1, 2, 8—"Auditum mulcent . . . argumenta fictis casibus amatorum referta quibus vel multum Arbiter exercuit, etc." In modern times the identification of the writer with the courtier is accepted by a large majority, in Collignon's statistics by 31 as against 2 who set the writer before the age of Nero and 15 who set him later. The "Identifiers" include such names as Bücheler, Mommsen, Friedlaender, Boissier, Renan. Enia and Haley accept the identification confidently. The style of the narrator is very good Latin and suits the age of Nero as admirably as does his tone the Tacitean personality. The Poem on the Civil War has obvious reference of some

kind or another to Lucan's First Book (*cf.* note below) and suggests its recent publication therefore. Not too much may be made of the name "Arbiter," but it may have been borrowed from Tacitus' account and given later as a nickname (similar *e.g.* as Mommsen suggests to that of "Annalis"). We need not accuse Tacitus of making a pun even if we approve the identification. Neither is there any good argument against it. Collignon, *e.g.*, hesitates because Tacitus never mentions Petronius as a writer. But this has been explained in a variety of ways, *e.g.* the historian's interest was solely in the man's death ; his novel had nothing to do with his position at Court or his fate ; it was so well known that it was unnecessary to mention it ; Tacitus never mentions a single one of Seneca's many writings, nor has the slightest interest in the literature of the age ; and so forth. These explanations seem satisfactory, and, *e.g.*, Enia urges them very well. The language of the "Feast" is the vulgarised tongue of lower Italy somewhat "stilisirt" and a priceless source for our knowledge of vulgar Latin, *cf.* Klebs, p. 634. But this is no proof of a late date, and the polished language of the writer proper has been shown to bear very strong resemblance to that of Seneca by Studer ; *cf. op. cit.* especially pp. 89-92. The first mention of the work is, it seems, by Terentianus Maurus at end of the third century. Sidonius Apollinaris (Carm. xxiii. 155) praises it very warmly, and the extracts made, probably in the Theodosian epoch, quickly supplanted the whole work (*cf.* Collignon, p. 1 ; Boissier, p. 401, etc.). But it is notoriously dangerous to argue to the lateness of a work from the lateness of the first extant mention of it. Those who, like Niebuhr and Sogliano, reject the time of Nero and the identification wander in their various fancies down the centuries from Domitian to Constantine. I accept the identification on the whole with confidence. The arguments against are best presented by Collignon, pp. 330-358. Sogliano is particularly unconvincing and a trifle wild.

(*B*) *Time of the Romance :* Accepting the identification, we find three times suggested in which the incidents are supposed to have been placed by the writer. (1) Augustus, by Mommsen. (2) End of Tiberius, by Bücheler. (3) End of Claudius and beginning of Nero, by Studer and Friedländer. Haley, pp. 3-21, follows Mommsen, and Boissier Friedländer. The arguments are long and minute and conflicting, too long for discussion here, as the point is of no great importance for our purpose, as whatever the supposed date (which after all varies only within narrow limits) the picture of life is obviously that of the writer's experience, *i.e.* of the age of Nero. For myself after study of the controversy I decidedly prefer to adopt Friedländer's view—despite Haley's very able paper.

(*C*) *Trimalchio's Town :* Again a point for our purpose of no great importance but hotly debated. It is an Urbs graeca (§ 81), and a Roman Colonia (§§ 44, 57, 76) on the sea-shore, not far from Baiae (§§ 53, 104) and Capua (§ 62). The choice lies between Neapolis, which Collignon favours, Misenum, Puteoli, and Cumae, of which the data already given between them rule out the first two. A desperate attempt by Fisch *op. cit.* to maintain the claims of Tarracina is so bad a failure as to be almost ludicrous. This theory is worthless. Puteoli and Cumae are serious rivals, Friedländer and Mommsen supporting Cumae, and Haley Puteoli. The chief argument for Cumae is that Encolpius in § 65 speaks of the "Praetor" of the city, which was a title for the local magistrate peculiar to Cumae. The chief argument against it is Trimalchio's remark in § 48 "Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego

ipse oculis meis vidi," which might seem absurd if the scene is laid at Cumae. Friedländer supposes "Cumis" an interpolation therefore: Mommsen suggests it only heightens the comic effect. Neither explanation appeals to me, and Haley's arguments for Puteoli are ingenious and all but convincing. If so, the stranger Encolpius not unnaturally speaks of the "praetor" of the local city. He could not be expected to use precise municipal language. The old colony at Puteoli was, in Haley's view, swamped by the Greek element, which helps to explain Nero's recolonisation of the city in A.D. 59 (*cf.* above cap. iii. p. 99). Hence it could be called a "Greek city." But the Roman element in the town looked down scornfully on the Greek, and hence the insistence on the "Colony" and the Roman flavour of the meal and guests. Also despite the temporary depression in § 44 the town is clearly a busy and a flourishing one, and Trimalchio made his money by trade. This suits Puteoli far better than Cumae, and I definitely prefer the former. Haley's paper deserves the more recognition here as it is omitted in Collignon's long bibliographical list. The "Cumas usque progressus" of Tacitus, Ann. xiv. 19, and the "Vigiles" of Puteoli, ap. Suetonius, Claud. 25, are worthless arguments on either side.

(*D*) *Purpose of the Romance, etc.:* Most certainly there is neither moral nor political purpose in the romance. The identifications once proposed, and even still proposed, are hopelessly absurd. Trimalchio does not and cannot=either Nero (as Cocchia according to Enia) or Galba (as Fisch), nor does Agamemnon=Seneca. Such "keys to Petronius" ought to have passed away with the sixteenth century when they were popular. *Cf.* Collignon, pp. 11 *sq.*; Enia, p. 44. Enia demonstrates forcibly and at length the impossibility of the "Nero" hypothesis, and here again has written a valuable paper. Similarly, as Mommsen, p. 107, says, "the silly attempt to identify the Satirae with the Sündenregister which Petronius on his last day sent to Nero is now universally abandoned."

(*E*) *The Poem on the Civil War:* §§ 119-124, 295 lines, covers the ground traversed by Lucan in the First Book of the Pharsalia, and has been variously held to be a parody of Lucan (Thomas, Westerburg), a rival poem to show Lucan how the subject should be treated, a piece "after Lucan," or to be independent of Lucan altogether. The poem is far too good to be a parody, and the view that Petronius merely disapproves of Lucan's treatment in so far as the latter departs from the Virgilian tradition and makes a too restricted use of the epic machinery of the Gods (Collignon and Enia) seems to me probable. It is not a Caesarian reply to a Pompeian poem certainly. Kindt is to me unconvincing. *Cf.* especially Collignon c. 3; Boissier, pp. 257-264.

CHAPTER X

It is hardly possible to make a statement on the subject of Christianity and the Government, etc., without impinging on some, and often a furious, controversy. For modern works see the Gen. Bibliog. J., where the 34 odd books or papers must suffice. In Appendix B will be found the ancient evidence, and a discussion of some disputes, the conclusions reached in which I use here without further notice.

Sect. 1. *Page* 345. *The Legends:* Tertull. Apol. 5 ; Chron. Pasch. i. 459. There is no evidence that the "strangers of Rome" in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, ap. Acts 2. 10, returned as converts to Rome, as Allard holds, though it is a very possible hypothesis. *St Peter at Rome* in 42 : Eusebius, H. E. ii. 14 and Chron. ad ann. St Jerome, De vir. ill. i., *cf.* Lightfoot, Ep. Clem. ii. pp. 490 *sq.* Renan pp. 29-31, etc. *Growth in Rome : cf.* Acts 18. 2. Suetonius, Claud. 25. Epist. Romans 16 : and perhaps 2nd Tim. 4. 21. So in Bithynia under Trajan, *cf.* Pliny, Ep. x. 97. The "multitudo ingens.," see Appendix B, *cf.* too Hardy, § 4, Merivale vi. p. 259 n. *Pomponia Graecina :* Ann. xiii. 32. Her Christianity is maintained with more or less hesitation, *e.g.* by Renan, pp. 1-4, very prettily, Merivale vi. 271-273, Raabe, Lightfoot (S. Clem. i. 30-32), Allard, pp. 26-27, etc. Hasenclever, pp. 47-64, at great length proposes the view that she was at first a Jewish proselyte, hence her acquittal (as Judaism was not a religio illicita), but subsequently became a Christian. No early tradition or Christian Father claims her as a Christian ; and, *e.g.*, Friedländer and Schiller deny it with vigour, while Bury views the theory, it seems, as very doubtful. As Lightfoot however points out, the domestic tribunal would not be careful to distinguish between Judaism and Christianity, and hence the acquittal could be explained on Hasenclever's grounds without following him to his unnecessary half-way house. The most ingenious argument is G. B. de Rossi's old one, ap. La Roma Sotteranea Cristiana, Roma, 1867, ii. pp. 361-364, and Plate xlix. 27, who, finding the name Pomponius Graecinus, of *c.* end of second century, ap. the so-called "Crypt of Lucina," a first-century portion of the Catacombs of Callistus, identifies the "Lucina" with Pomponia Graecina, regarding it as her baptismal nom de plume, for which kind of change at baptism's *φωτισμός* there are parallels. *Cf.* the "Sentia Renata" of the Columbaria of Claudius, ap. Merivale *loc. cit.* *Cf.* Lightfoot *loc. cit.* We may perhaps allow this real genius in an archeologist its prize, despite the silence of early tradition. No one of course could regard the conclusion as proved by the evidence. That converts were mainly among lower classes is a common charge against Christianity for four centuries. *Cf.* Newman, Grammar of Assent, c. 10, and Gibbon ii. xv. 68.

Page 345. St Paul in Rome : A.D. 61 according to Merivale, Lightfoot, Aubé, Renan. A.D. 62, as Duruy, Keim, seems less probable. *ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ* (Phil. i. 13) taken of the palace precincts by Merivale and Erbes : of the praetorian camp by Renan and Lightfoot : I prefer the former view. Ramsay's view (St Paul 348, 357) seems to be that he was handed over to the Princeps Peregrinorum in his camp on the Caelian, but that the Praetorium=the supreme court ! I do not quite follow it. St Paul in Rome : Acts 28. 31 ; Philip. 1. 12-14, 4. 22, A.D. 61 ; expectation of release : *ib.* 1. 25-27 ; 2. 24 ; Philem. 22.

Page 346. St Paul's later career : The journey to Spain is spoken of as an intention, ap. Epist. Rom. 15. 28, as a fact, *e.g.*, by the Muratorian canon. It is accepted, *e.g.*, by Renan and Lightfoot, denied by Aubé and Keim. K. denies the acquittal. Much turns on St Clement's words, ap. Epist. Cor. 5. 6, where he says St Paul "*κῆρυξ γενόμενος ἔν τε τῇ ἀνατολῇ καὶ ἐν τῇ δύσει . . . καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως ἐλθὼν καί μαρτυρήσας ἐπὶ τῶν ἡγουμένων, οὕτως ἀπηλλάγη τοῦ κόσμου.*" It is impossible to say if *ἐπὶ το τέρμα τῆς δύσεως* means Spain (as Lightfoot), or Italy (as Keim). In the mouth of a Roman perhaps the former is slightly more probable. But very little

can be built on this. On the other hand the Pastoral Epistles seem to me certainly to imply a journey in Asia Minor (*not* necessarily in Crete as well, as Titus may have been left there on the first voyage to Rome), *e.g.* 2 Tim. 4. 13, 20 (Titus 3. 12 may apply to the first imprisonment, and so its confidence be explained), and *after* the first stay in Rome, and I see no reason to doubt their authenticity, as does Renan that of 2nd Tim. Acts 20. 25 and 38 certainly are no argument on the other side if we accept the date suggested in the text for Acts. Neither St Paul nor St Luke were prophets.

The verse Acts 28. 31 I think can only be explained as I have done in the text. No other hypothesis really explains St Luke's silence. For Ramsay's theory (in his St Paul) of an intended third work there is no scrap of good evidence. Certainly the πρῶτον instead of πρότερον in 1. 1 is not this. If the writer knew of St Paul's martyrdom, his hint of it in ἀκωλύτως as implying a subsequent κώλυσις is intolerably weak. If he wished to conceal it, his silence is instantly provocative of remark. If St Paul was acquitted why did he not say so? Rejecting Ramsay's theory the only good explanation of our ignorance of St Paul's later career is that St Luke ceased to write his narrative in A.D. 63. I suppose he wrote it during the two years in Rome.

Christian Tradition of Eusebius, Origen, St Jerome, etc. etc., which is worth very little, ascribes St Paul's death to A.D. 67 or 68. Yet another tradition makes him slain on the same day as St Peter—and St Clement among others implies they were victims of the persecution of A.D. 64. *Cf.* the mass of authorities, ap. Renan c. 8. The moderns are much divided. I imagine the later date mainly due to the desire to allow time for the supposed visit to Spain. I cannot think it probable that the two Apostles were "isolated victims of the spent wave of the persecution," as Lightfoot. The very day is uncertain, Feb. 22 being the day of an old, June 29 of a more popular, tradition. As Erbes says, neither suits the persecution of Aug.-Sept. 64 very well, and the June date suits it very badly. Erbes makes out a most ingenious time-table, but at the cost of rejecting the acquittal.

The whole matter must remain uncertain. I state in the text what seems to me the most likely view.

Page 349. *Foreign Religions. Cf.* Cic. De legibus ii. 8. Paulus, Sentent. v. 21. *Cf.* Dio lxvii. 14. Tertullian, Apol. 24. Hülle, p. 7, and especially Dio lii. 36.

The Lex Julia de Collegiis : *cf.* C. I. L. vi. 2193, and article "Collegium," ap. Ruggiero Diz. Epig. di Ant. Rom. ii. 1, pp. 352, 353. See also App. B.

Christianity and public life : *cf.* Tertullian, Apol. 42, "infructuosi in negotiis dicimur," Lightfoot, ap. Ep. Clem. i. p. 35, Allard. Introd.

Christian evidence : see App. B and the Acts and Epist. James *passim.*

Sect. 2. *Page* 353. Antipas : Apoc. 2, 13. Caesar-Worship in Asia : *ib.* 13, 15. St Peter in Rome : *cf.* Erbes, *op. cit.* Lipsius, Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten ii. 1, pp. 1 *sqq.* ; Aubé, *op. cit.* pp. 125 *sq.* ; Lightfoot, Ep. Clem. ii. 490-501 ; Renan, cap. 8. Anc. evidence, 1 Ep. St Peter, 5. 13 ; St John, 21. 18 ; St Clement, Ep. Cor. 5 ; Ignatius, Ep. Rom. 4 ; Eusebius, H. E. ii. 15. 25 ; iii. 1 ; vi. 14, etc. Renan's collection of authorities is magnificent, but he is badly misled by his one idée fixe : quite a King Charles' head to him. The tradition of the Apostle's death on the Janiculum (hence St Pietro in Montorio there) seems later and due to a

confusion. *Cf.* Lipsius, *op. cit.* ii. 1. 400; Lanciani, Pagan and Christian Rome, pp. 127, 128. The most descriptive story of the apostles' deaths seems to be given in the? fourth century, "Lini episcopi de passione Petri et Pauli Tradita," a work of edification whose manifest historic absurdities did not of course injure it in the eyes of its generation. The Quo Vadis legend has been well and imaginatively told by the modern novelist, whose romance with this title is so clever that the historian of the age of Nero must needs put it away for many months and forget it before he begins his more sober history.

Page 357. Mithraism; *cf.* Cumont, Franz: Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra, 2 voll. Bruxelles, 1896-1899, especially i. c. 1-3. The earliest Roman dedication is *c.* 100 A.D. that of T. Flavius Hyginus Ephebianus, at Rome (No. 66). The latest dated monument is A.D. 387, but its tenets last into Manichean and Albigensian days. The best criticism I know upon Gibbon's "secondary causes" is Newman's, in the Grammar of Assent, chapter 10.

Sect. 4. *Page* 363. The Authorities: *cf.* Tacitus' sneers at Felix "tanta potentia subnixo," Ann. xii. 54; "servili ingenio exercuit," Hist. v. 9, betraying the origin of his dislike. Josephus: contrast *e.g.* Antiq. xx. 8 with B. J. ii. 13. *Cf.* too Renan, p. 241. For the Acts of the Apostles, *cf. supra*, § 1.

Page 367. St James' martyrdom. Niese accepts Jos. Antiq. xx. 9. 1, as genuine, while rejecting the passage, ap. Antiq. xviii. 3. 3, relative to Christ. The date A.D. 62 is not really contradicted by Hegesippus' very much later statement, ap. Eusebius, H. E. ii. 23.

Sect. 5. *Page* 376. The narrative of the Jewish war in §§ 4 and 5 is little but an abbreviation of Josephus. There exists no other authority.

CHAPTER XI

Sect. 1. *Page* 382. *Naples:* Suetonius, Nero 20, 31. *Rome:* Tacitus, Ann. xvi. 5, 6. Suetonius, Nero 21, 23, 24. Vesp. 4; *cf.* Dio lxiii. 15. *Pasquinades:* Suetonius, Nero 39. *Journey to Greece:* a splendid opportunity for Dio's rhetorical comparisons. "These Neronian troops for armour wore masks: their marching was all upon the stage: their weapons the lyre and psaltery," etc. etc. Dio lxiii. 8. There is no reason for supposing any political motive in the journey. *Cf.* Suetonius, Nero 22. Date ap. Acta Frat. Arval. pp. lxxxiv. and 172. Messalina's name is supplied both here and in the "Freedom of Greece" inscription (see note below) with probability.

Sect. 2. *Page* 387. *Nero in Greece:* Suetonius, Nero 204, 53; Dio lxiii. 8-14; Philostratus, Vit. Apoll. v. 7, 8; vii. 11. Pausanias ii. 17. 6; 37. 5; v. 12. 8; Dio Chrys. Or. 32 (p. 421) and 21. Philostratus (?) "Nero"—*ad fin.* Dio's defence: lxiii. 20. 6. *The Corinth Canal:* Pliny, N. H. 4. 10; Suetonius, Calig. 21, Nero 19; Dio lxiii. 16; but especially Philostratus, Vit. Apoll. iv. 24, v. 7, and the "Nero" *ad init.*; *cf.* Nero's jealousy of Paris the dancer, according to Suetonius, Nero 54. *Cf.* Mahaffy. Greek world under Roman sway, p. 271; Alfred Marks, *op. cit.* p. 1.

Distrust of the plan, ap. Orac. Sibyllina v. 155, *cf.* Geffcken, *op. cit.* pp. 444-446.

Page 389. *The Vinician Conspiracy:* Suetonius, Nero 36. Acta Frat. Arval. pp. lxxx., lxxxi., lxxxiv. must refer to this, from Suetonius' dating. So Schiller, p. 229, and Henzen *ad loc.* Vinicianus: Ann. xv. 28; Dio lxii. 23. The Scribonii: Tacitus, Hist. iv. 41; Dio lxiii. 17. Death of Corbulo: Dio lxiii. 17. Modern views: *cf.* Furneaux, p. 634; Merivale vi. p. 345; Baring-Gould, p. 243; Wollfgramm, "Corbulo," p. 15; Latour St Ybars, p. 541—a crescendo of indignant admiration.

Sect. 3. *Page* 392. *The Liberty of Greece:* Authorities: (*A*) *Ancient:* Suetonius, Nero 24; Pliny, N. H. 4. 22; Pausanias vii. 17. 2; Plutarch, Vita. Flamin. c. 12, p. 376; De sera Num. vind. 22; Philostratus, Vita. Apoll. v. 41. The Plato ref. is Rep. vi. 491 E. (*B*) *Modern:* The Inscr. was first published in 1888 by M. Maurice Holleaux, who discovered it in September of that year. (*a*) *Text and Commentary: Holleaux, M.* "Discours de Néron," etc., ap. Bulletin de Corr. Hellén. xii. 1888, pp. 510-528; republished as amended and with facsimile as a separate pamphlet at Lyons in 1889; *Gatti, G.*, "Nerone e la libertà ellenica," ap. Bullettino dell' Istituto di Diritto Romano, Anno. ii. Fasc. iii.-v. Roma, 1889, pp. 136-141; *cf.* also *Pick, B.*, Über einige Münzen der röm. Kaiserzeit ap. Zeitschrift für Numismatik, Band xvii. Heft 2. Berlin, 1890, pp. 180-188. (*b*) *Text only:* ap. Wochenschrift für class. Phil. 1889, No. 18, pp. 494-5; Berliner phil. Wochenschrift, 26 Jan. 1889, pp. 106-107. (*c*) *Translations*—whole—*Foucart M.*, ap. Acad. des Inscr. et B-Lettres, Comptes rendus, etc., 1888, iv. série. Tome xvi. pp. 488-9. Paris (16 Nov. 1888)—reproduced in L'Année epig. 1889, pp. 57, 58, also ap. Révue des études Grecques, i. No. 4, Oct.-Dec. 1888, pp. 465-6. Paris. Ditto—part—(with text) ap. *Mahaffy.* "Greek World under Roman Sway," pp. 256-7 and App. A.

Date: Pick prefers A.D. 66—and either correct counting of Nero's Tribunates supports this view, if the Inscr. Trib. Pot. xiii. is correct. *Cf.* Appendix C. But Suetonius speaks of the grant being made by Nero "on leaving," and this is more probable in itself. The Arval Tablets show that he only left Rome on Sept. 25 A.D. 66. Mommsen argues that the proconsul in Sardinia succeeds Juventius Rixa the last procurator between July 67—July 68; *cf.* C. I. L. x. 7852 and Mommsen, *ib.* p. 777. The day Nov. 28 is supplied by the Inscr. v. 5-6. Hence the Inscr. may be in error—just as the use of ἀποδεδειγμένος here is unmeaning. The local Boeotian may easily have tripped in the complicated reckoning of Nero's Tribunates, and counting straight through irrespective of the official reckoning gives Dec 4, 66—Dec. 3, 67 for Trib. Pot. xiii. See Appendix C. Also coins ap. Pick himself with legend Isthmia have the magistrates' names of Polyaenus and Optatus, viz. of A.D. 67, not those of A.D. 66, Cleander and Piso. I therefore accept Holleaux's date of Nov. 28, 67.

Various: Names: "Nero" is erased in all but two places. "Messalina" is Holleaux's suggestion for the erasure after Augusta. Fabia (Rev. de Phil. 1895, pp. 228-9) prefers "Poppaea"—although in this there are not enough letters to fill the gap. Dittenberger, ap. C. Inscr. Graec. Sept. i. 2713, denies Augusta can be used of a dead Empress, but Fabia quotes C. I. L. vi. 2044, ix. 1331 against him. I prefer Messalina—accepting Henzen's insertion of her name in the Acta Arval. p. lxxxiv.

Τὴν ἕως νῦν Πελοπόννησον: very curious, and probably something to do with the new canal. Holleaux suggests Nero meant to change its name after the canal was finished. *Cf.* Patrae called Neroniana. For Nero's apotheosis as Zeus Eleutherios, *cf.* Coin of Magnesia ad Sipylum, ap. Eckhel vi. p. 279, and Attic Inscr. even of A.D. 61 ap. C. I. Att. iii. 1085. The Adventus and Adlocutio Augusti on coins of Corinth and Patrae with picture of ship—Eckhel vi. p. 279; Cat. Gk. Coins in B. M. "Corinth," pp. 67-71.

Sect. 4. *Page* 394. *The Delatores:* Tacitus, Hist. i. 2; ii. 10; iv. 7, 8, 41-44. Pliny, Epist. i. 5; iii. 7. *The Freedmen:* Helius: Dio lxiv. 3; Polyclitus: *cf.* above pp. 217, 382. Tacitus, Hist. i. 37; ii. 95; Pliny, Epist. vi. 31. 9; Patrobius: Dio lxiii. 3; Tacitus, Hist. i. 49; ii. 95; Pliny, N. H. 35, 168; Dio lxiv. 3. Their fate: Plutarch, Galba 17. Petinus: *ib.* Halotus: Suetonius, Galba 15; Coenus: Tacitus, Hist. ii. 54. The "dispensator" of the Armenian War of Pliny, N. H. 7. 129= the procurator summarum of Henzen, Inscr. 6525; *cf.* Suetonius, Vesp. 23. Henzen, Inscr. 6396. *The Return to Rome:* Suetonius, Nero 23, 25. Dio lxiii. 19-21.

Page 395. *The Revolt of Vindex:* In this section I develop a view which I have formed from a study of the complicated evidence and the very long and fierce modern controversy on the subject. It is in some measure a novel view. To justify it step by step is here impossible. I can only quote the ancient and modern authorities and hope to publish presently elsewhere a detailed investigation.

Authorities: (*A*) *Ancient:* Dio lxiii. 22-25 in the three versions of Xiphilinus, Zonaras, and John of Antioch, as ap. Boissevain. Also lxiii. 27; lxiv. 4; Suetonius, Nero 40, Galba 9-11 especially, and passages in 12 and 16, Vitellius 8. Plutarch: Galba 4-10 and 18 especially, and passages in 22 and 29. Tacitus: Hist. i. 8, 16, 51-53, 65, 89; ii. 61, 94; iv. 17, 57. Pliny, N. H. 20, 160—the famous description of Vindex as "adsertorem illum a Nerone libertatis." Josephus: Bell. Jud. Proem. 2 and iv. 8. 1, 9. 2; Philostratus: Vit. Ap. v. 10: Rufus' epitaph ap. Pliny, Epist. ix. 19. 1.

> "Hic situs est Rufus, pulso qui Vindice quondam,
> Imperium adseruit, non sibi sed patriae,"

where the "pulso Vindice" *must* be causal or explanatory, not merely (as Mommsen in defence of a thesis) a chronological point.

(*B*) *Modern:* See General Bibliography for details of works, etc. Sievers in 1870 first in comparatively recent times suggested that Vindex was Gallic champion, a view defended first at length by Schiller in 1872, in his "Nero" pp. 261-276. Then begins the war of periodicals. Mommsen in 1878 in Hermes xiii. 90-105, taking little notice of Schiller, portrayed Vindex as fighting for the restoration of the Republic. He made much use of Pliny's phrase, and wrote somewhat fiercely. Schiller replied in two articles in quick succession in 1880 attacking Mommsen. Mommsen retaliated in 1881 in Hermes xvi. 147-152, in a rather petulant and angry article, which bore marks of haste upon its face. Schiller made a courteous reply to this in 1883, maintaining steadily his view and with additional arguments. This ends the German fight Then in 1887 Cantarelli propounded a third view of his own, denying that Vindex had any motive at all except to get rid of the person of Nero.

He was neither Gallic champion nor Republican enthusiast. Of late years Schiller's has been the favourite view. No one to my knowledge accepts Mommsen's, and no one save Callegari has noticed Cantarelli's paper, which deserves a better fate.

Comparing A and B a close analysis shows that Dio is for Cantarelli and against Schiller. Tacitus and Josephus feebly, Plutarch strongly, favour Schiller. No single authority decisively supports Mommsen. Suetonius' view we cannot discover. Pliny stands as a neutral. It is only by a close scrutiny of the opinions, so far as we can discover them, of the actual agents in the drama that we can arrive at the truth. A study of Verginius' and Galba's actions and of those of the German legions leads to conclusions as unfavourable to Schiller's view in its entirety as that of the Gauls' and of Nero's opinions seems to support it. Not one supports Mommsen's view.

I regret to have had to formulate after long study a fourth view, but I submit it as harmonising all our authorities by explaining their discrepancies, and as accounting satisfactorily (I hope) for every action of all the personages of the drama, Vindex, Galba, Verginius, Nero, the Gauls, and the German legions. And I cannot discover these two merits in either Schiller's or Cantarelli's view. Mommsen's has no positive evidence for it and is in every respect inferior to its rivals. The view here expressed approximates to Schiller's in the main thesis but differs from it in several respects not here to be explained or justified.

Sect. 5. *Page* 396. *Galba:* Suetonius, Galba 1-9. Plutarch, Galba 3, 4, 8. Praenomen "Lucius" up to A.D. 68; Servius after.

Sect. 6. *Page* 408. *Cf.* Suetonius, Nero 40-42; Dio lxiii. 26, 27; Plutarch, Galba 5, 6, 15; Tacitus, Hist. i. 6, 9, 73. There is a confusion between Xiphilinus and Zonaras as to Petronius and Rubrius Gallus, and following Tacitus, Hist. i. 6, 37, and Plutarch, Galba 15, 17, I adopt Schiller's suggestion (p. 41) in the text.

Page 409. Suetonius, Nero 44-46; Dio lxiii. 28. *Cf.* Henzen, Acta Frat. Arval. p. 239. The Guard's desertion: Tacitus, Hist. i. 5, 30, 72; Plutarch, Galba 2. 14. "Iam Gallos eum cantando excitasse": *e.g.* modern equivalents, "The fiddler's scraping had enticed the Natives from their shells at last," or "His horn had roused the Boers from their lairs," etc.

Page 410. Suetonius, Nero 47; Dio lxiii. 27; Pliny, N. H. 37. 29. The "Statio" was presumably on duty at the gardens (the precise site of which is uncertain). It must have been a recognised unit in the force, as this same "statio" is said to have been on duty on the day of Caligula's murder, and of Galba's murder, ap. Suetonius, Otho 6. Nero's various utterances are ascribed now to one place by one writer, now to another by a second. *Cf. e.g.* Plutarch, Galba 5, with Suetonius, Nero 47, and Dio lxiii. 29 with the same. His last words were evidently current in Rome and put into the story as writers thought best. But the modern historian is helpless in the matter. The question whether Scipulus of the German bodyguard (?) ap. Dio = John of Antioch lxiii. 27 is Spiculus the myrmillo of Suetonius, Nero 30, Plutarch, Galba 8, C. I. L. vi. 8803, is discussed by Boissevain in his edition of Dio iii. n. p. 93, and is of very minor interest. I omit him in the text.

Page 412. *Phaon's Villa: cf.* Lanciani, ap. Bullettino della Comm. arch. Com. di Roma. June 1891, pp. 227-229, and "Pagan and Christian Rome," pp. 186-190. It is a pity that the "enchanting view" would not be visible from the cellar. "Haec est Neronis decocta." *Cf.* Pliny, N. H. 31. 40. The drink was his own invention.

"*Qualis artifex pereo.*" Save the prudent Schiller, every writer wrestles with the translation of this untranslatable saying. De Quincey is truly magnificent: "Passionate ejaculations on the blindness of fortune in suffering so divine a musical artist to be thus violently snatched away, and on the calamitous fate of musical science, which then stood on the brink of so dire an eclipse." Thirty-nine words for three. "Quel artiste, et je meurs!" of Latour St Ybars, p. 574, is ahead of the French efforts of Duruy iv. 95, Beulé, p. 397, Champagny ii. 298, Renan, p. 312. The German grumbles along in Wiedemeister, p. 302, and Raabe, p. 430, as prosaically as we English, in Merivale vi. p. 364, Baring-Gould, p. 253, Bury, p. 297, and my own effort. A brilliant suggestion, made to me at Merton, "What a loss to the Royal Academy," cannot, I fear, be admitted into the text. The phrase, however, does *not* mean "How very artistically I am dying," as Reinhold, p. 47, closely followed by Dr Fountain, p. 38.

Sect. 7. *Page* 415. *Nero's appearance:* Suetonius, Nero 51; Tacitus, Hist. i. 7; Pliny, N. H. 11. 144; "Philostratus," "Nero" pp. 640, 641; Marcellus, De Medicamentis xx. 84. *Character:* Suetonius, Nero 30, 55, 56. Pliny, N. H. 8. 196; 29. 93; 30. 14; 37. 17, 20. *Cf.* Tacitus, Ann. xvi. 12; Hist. i. 20. *Cf.* Middleton, Anc. Rome i. 22 The "Mania" Theory: De Quincey, p. 107; Raabe, p. 450; Wiedemeister—*op. cit.* pp. 209-306—accepted by Baring-Gould ii. pp. 196-203.

Sect. 8. *Page* 417. Reff.: Suetonius, Nero 48-50, 57; Galba 15; Dio lxiii. 25, 29; lxiv. 3. Plutarch, Galba 8, 17. Eutropius vii. 15; Orosius vii. 7. *Ecloge: cf.* Lanciani, *op. cit. ad Not. supra* p. 229. *Sporus:* Plutarch, Galba 9; Dio lxiv. 8. *Epaphroditus:* Suetonius, Dom. 14. Dio lxvii. 14. *Tigellinus:* Tacitus, Hist. i. 72; Plutarch, Galba 8, 17; Otho 2.

Page 418. Nero's popularity after death: *cf.* Tacitus, Hist. i. 4, 16, 25; ii. 11. Suetonius, Nero 57. *id.* with Otho: Tacitus, Hist. i. 78. Plutarch: Otho 3; Suetonius, Otho 7, 10; Dio lxiv. 6. *id.* with Vitellius: Tacitus, Hist. ii. 71, 95; Suetonius, Vit. 11; Eutropius vii. 18.

Page 419. *Later Tradition:* The "Octavia." See Appendix A. *Cf.* Suetonius, Dom. 14. Pliny, Panegyr. 53; Juvenal iv. 38 (with *e.g.* Tertullian, Apol. 5); Martial vii. 21; xi. 33; Statius, Silv. ii. 7. Trajan: see *supra* p. 75. Marcus: Op. iii. 16 (M. Casaubon's Trans.); Vulcacius, Vita Cassii 8. 4; Capitolinus 28. 10; Epictetus iv. 5. 17. The Scriptores Historiae Augustae—*passim.*

Page 420. *The Nero Pretenders:* (1) Tacitus, Hist. i. 2; ii. 8, 9. P. Hochart's criticisms on this last passage, ap. Annales de la Faculté des Lettres de Bordeaux, 1891, pp. 244-250, need not detain us. Dio lxiv. 9=Zonaras xi. 15=Xiphilinus 191. 3. (2) Suetonius, Nero 57. Dio lxvi. 19=Zonaras xi. 18; xii. John of Antioch, p. 104, ed. Müller.

Page 421. *The Nero Legend:* (1) Pagan: Tacitus, Hist. ii. 8; Dio Chrys. Or. xxi.

(2) Jewish : Orac. Sibyllina v. 361 *sqq.* (A.D. 71) ; *cf.* iv. 119 *sqq.* viii. 68 *sqq.* Lightfoot, Epist. Clem. ii. p. 511.

(3) Christian : Sulpic. Severus Chron. ii. 29 ; Dial. ii. 14 ; S. Augustine De Civ. Dei. xx. 19 ; Orac. Sibyllina xiii. 122 *sq.* (end third century), etc. etc. ; *cf.* Renan, p. 318. Lactantius, De Mort. Pers. 2. *Cf.* in general Geffcken, Nordmeyer, and Callegari, *op. cit.* in Gen. Bibl. But a Baronius is needed to do justice to the theme. The *Christian* belief, Merivale, vi. p. 284 n., says, "cannot be traced back to primitive times." But the Apocalypse may be remembered. *Cf.* Appendix B.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

In the following list no works are mentioned which I have not consulted expressly for the purpose of this history. The majority I have read through. It therefore cannot pretend to be an exhaustive list, especially as regards older works long since out of date. But it may serve as a guidance, and also as an explanation of the frequent use in the notes of the reference "*op. cit.*" or of the bare mention there of writers by their names only.

The works are arranged under headings, and alphabetically under each heading. A number of papers and monographs on minor subjects are mentioned only in the notes in their appropriate places, and not here.

For the Ancient Authorities consult Appendix A, where also are references to modern works concerning them, not repeated here.

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Of the above works Beulé is pleasant reading. Champagny is excited, rhetorical, uncritical, of minimum value, *e.g.* in a none the less interesting chapter "Du Christianisme," the remark, "La philosophie tenait du Christianisme le peu de vérité qu'elle avait." De Quincey is most attractive in every respect, save from the historian's point of view. Duruy has some suggestive remarks and pretty phrases. Furneaux is a mine of references to authorities. Hertzberg is as dull as sensible. Latour St Ybars is very lengthy, very discursive, very fanciful. Lehmann is useful. Merivale is sober, stately, valuable, and truly English. Raabe is painstaking and possesses little other merit, literary or otherwise. An amusing Appendix, however, forms a justifiable answer to a petulant and pedantic attack made upon his book by Schiller. Ranke naturally neglects details. Renan is useful, and, of course, attractive reading; the idée fixe runs riot, and the imagination is powerful. Schiller is most laborious, and gives a vast amount of information. He has very little sense of proportion, and seems to be more of an encyclopædist than a historian. His 720 pages cannot fail to be sometimes useful, and at times after independent inquiry, I find myself in accord with him. Sievers deals only with the last two years of the reign, and is not remarkable. Stahr is a little wearisome. Professor Pelham's Lectures on the Principate of Nero (unpublished) are of great service.

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A curious collection of papers, of which Callegari's is the most useful and Martelli's the most mad. Of the three "Whitewashings" of Nero, Reinhold's is perhaps better than G. H. L. (presumably G. H. Lewes) or Fountain's which is an amusing jeu d'esprit. Baring-Gould uses Wiedemeister largely, on whom see chap. xi. § 7 and note.

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M.—VARIOUS

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For Iconography, cf.:

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For Questions of Constitutional History I have used, of course, Mommsen's Staatsrecht, but usually in the French Translation, as this is both more accessible to

English readers and embodies the latest editions and corrections ; my references are thus to the Manuel des Antiquités Romaines, par Th. M. et Joachim Marquardt, traduit de l'Allemand sous la direction de M. Gustave Humbert, 17 tomes in 18, especially Tome v.

Besides this every Oxford man owes chief indebtedness to Professor Pelham's Lectures on the Constitution of the Principate, which are unpublished. Also Greenidge, A. H. J., 'Roman Public Life,' London, 1901, is useful.

For the Geography of Italy, e.g. Antium, Subiaco, Tarracina, Misenum, Pozzuoli, Velletri, Pisa, Volterra, etc., I rely on my own visits to these places. For Britain, Armenia, and Judaea, *cf.* the special bibliographies and maps in this volume.

The Inscriptions used are many, and are mentioned in their places in the notes.

INDICES

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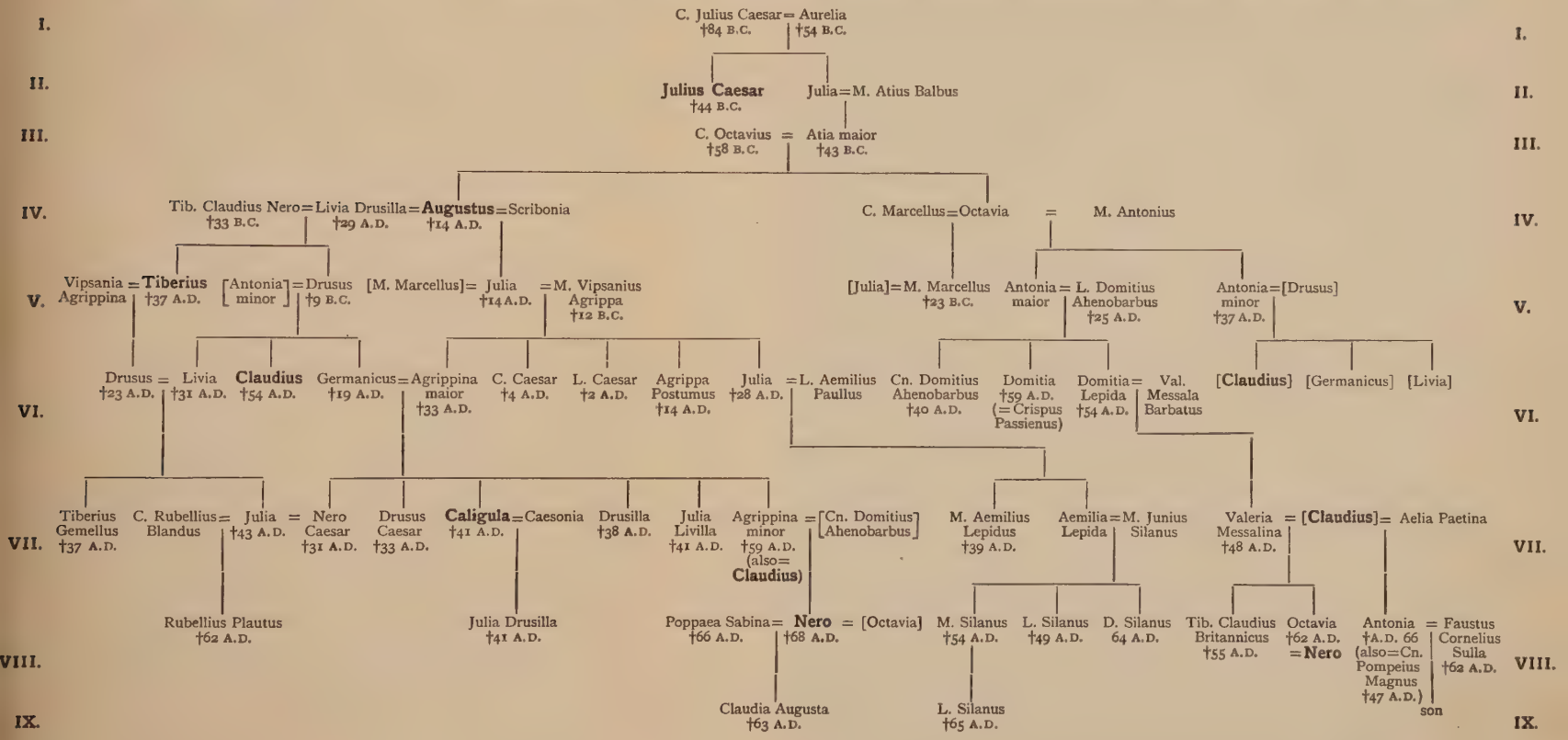
GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE IMPERIAL FAMILY

Numerals at sides designate each a generation. Names enclosed in square brackets appear elsewhere in the table. Emperors' names in black type. † means died, = married.


I.
C. Julius Caesar = Aurelia
†84 B.C. †54 B.C.
II.
Julius Caesar
†44 B.C.
Julia = M. Atius Balbus
III.
C. Octavius = Atia maior
†58 B.C. †43 B.C.
IV.
Tib. Claudius Nero = Livia Drusilla = Augustus = Scribonia
†33 B.C. †29 A.D. †14 A.D.
C. Marcellus = Octavia = M. Antonius
V.
Vipsania Agrippina = Tiberius †37 A.D.
[Antonia minor] = Drusus †9 B.C.
[M. Marcellus] = Julia †14 A.D. = M. Vipsanius Agrippa †12 B.C.
[Julia] = M. Marcellus †23 B.C.
Antonia maior = L. Domitius Ahenobarbus †25 A.D.
Antonia minor †37 A.D. = [Drusus]
VI.
Drusus †23 A.D.
Livia †31 A.D.
Claudius †54 A.D.
Germanicus †19 A.D.
Agrippina maior †33 A.D.
C. Caesar †4 A.D.
L. Caesar †2 A.D.
Agrippa Postumus †14 A.D.
Julia †28 A.D. = L. Aemilius Paullus
Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus †40 A.D.
Domitia †59 A.D. (= Crispus Passienus)
Domitia Lepida †54 A.D. = Val. Messala Barbatus
[Claudius]
[Germanicus]
[Livia]
VII.
Tiberius Gemellus †37 A.D.
C. Rubellius Blandus = Julia †43 A.D.
Nero Caesar †31 A.D.
Drusus Caesar †33 A.D.
Caligula †41 A.D. = Caesonia
Drusilla †38 A.D.
Julia Livilla †41 A.D.
Agrippina minor †59 A.D. (also = Claudius) = [Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus]
M. Aemilius Lepidus †39 A.D.
Aemilia Lepida = M. Junius Silanus
Valeria Messalina †48 A.D. = [Claudius] = Aelia Paetina
VIII.
Rubellius Plautus †62 A.D.
Julia Drusilla †41 A.D.
Poppaea Sabina = Nero †68 A.D. = [Octavia]
M. Silanus †54 A.D.
L. Silanus †49 A.D.
D. Silanus 64 A.D.
Tib. Claudius Britannicus †55 A.D.
Octavia †62 A.D. = Nero
Antonia †A.D. 66 (also = Cn. Pompeius Magnus †47 A.D.) = Faustus Cornelius Sulla †62 A.D.
IX.
Claudia Augusta †63 A.D.
L. Silanus †65 A.D.
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